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THE CIJA REPORT:

A Pattern of Anti-Palestinian Racism
and Genocide Denial at the Centre for
Israel and Jewish Affairs



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AUTHORS

Larry Haiven, Avi Lewis, Sheryl Nestel, Shiri Pasternak,
Jillian Rogin, Vannina Sztainbok

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Executive Summary

This report shines a light on how the current discourse about antisemitism in Canada serves to manufacture consent for Israel's genocide in Gaza.

A number of pro-Israel institutions play a key role to these ends, including B'nai Brith Canada and the Friends of Simon Weisenthal - Centre for Holocaust Studies.¹ Playing an outsized role in this context is one pro-Israel lobby group, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA). Our report finds that CIJA engages in racism, the dehumanization of Palestinians, the promotion of unconditional support for the state of Israel and its military, and the silencing of Palestinians, their allies, and supporters, including dissenting Jewish voices. Through their social media posts, public statements, and lobby efforts, CIJA is engaging in the denial of an ongoing campaign of mass extermination that meets the legal definition of genocide.²

Racism is a key component of enabling genocide. Relying on false claims that Palestinians and their supporters are motivated by antisemitism³ and relying on widely critiqued data to manufacture the appearance of an astronomical rise in antisemitism, CIJA consistently engages racist and distorting tropes of Palestinians to support its lobbying.

Racism against Palestinians builds upon an architecture of discrimination that attributes a foundational antisemitism to Muslims and Arabs.

This report uncovers the mechanics of how CIJA's public statements, social media posts, and media releases operate to actively support the state of Israel and its genocidal campaign. CIJA's lobby efforts have included advocating for heightened criminalization of Palestine solidarity protests, such as "bubble-zone" legislation⁴ and enhanced funding for policing and law enforcement. It has also engaged in "lawfare" — the strategic use of legal tools to suppress political opponents. The impact of these efforts has material consequences, including silencing voices that are calling for the liberation of Palestinian people from occupation, and engineering a longstanding "exception" rendering Palestine, Palestinian lives, and Palestinian human rights as unworthy of consideration.⁵

This report documents an escalation point, not a starting point. CIJA embraced anti-Palestinian racism and Islamophobic policies and expressions well before the October 7, 2023, Hamas attacks. For example, as reported by Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East, CIJA countered former New Democratic Party leader Jagmeet Singh's mild criticism of Israel's August 2022 bombing of Gaza by alleging that "the rabid Jew-hatred" of Palestinians is the cause of Palestinian suffering.⁶ In 2017, CIJA vehemently opposed Bill M-103, legislation created to address and document Islamophobia after the Quebec City mosque shooting in which six worshipers were killed and five injured.⁷ CIJA objected especially to the use of the term "Islamophobia,"⁸ referring to it as

1 Though it is beyond the scope of the report to analyze each group, their collective efforts build on one another. B'nai Brith in particular has played a central role in the university sector. See their [Submission to the Standing Committee on Science and Research for its Study Regarding the Distribution of Federal Government Funding Among Canada's Post-Secondary Institutions](#), May 24, 2024 and the Jewish Faculty Network's [response](#).

2 Human Rights Watch, *Israel's Crime of Extermination, Acts of Genocide in Gaza*, December 19, 2024.

3 For discussion centring the need for analytic clarity with respect to antisemitism, including the ways in which the term is falsely used to frame Palestinian activism, see: Abigail Bakan and Yasmeen Abu-Laban, "Antisemitism as Anti-Jewish Racism: Reflections on an Anti-Racist Analytic," *Historical Materialism* 32 (1): 225–66.

4 For an explanation and critique of bubble zone legislation, see: Irina Ceric, "[Bursting the bubble \(zone\): Resisting Toronto's anti-protest by-law](#)," *Canadian Dimension* (June 9, 2025).

5 For discussion on the "Palestine exception," see for example: Noura Erakat, *Justice for Some: Law and the Question of Palestine* (Stanford University Press, 2019); Marc Lamont Hill and Mitchell Plitnick, *Except for Palestine: The Limits of Progressive Politics* (The New Press, 2022); Palestine Legal and Center for Constitutional Rights, *The Palestine Exception to Free Speech: A Movement Under Attack in the US* (2015); Sheryl Nestel and Rowan Gaudet, *Unveiling the Chilly Climate: The Suppression of Speech on Palestine in Canada* (Independent Jewish Voices, 2022).

6 Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME), *Anti-Palestinian Racism in Canada: 2022 Report*: (CJPME, December, 2023).

7 *Motion M-103: Systemic Racism and Religious Discrimination*, 1st Sess., 42nd Parl., 2016. 65-66 Elizabeth II. 2017.

8 Steven Zhou, "Zionist Groups in Canada are Jumping on the 'Creeping Sharia' Bandwagon," *Buzzfeed Daily Newsletter*, November 15, 2017.

“misleading, ambiguous, and politically charged.”⁹ These are but a few examples of Islamophobic positions taken by CIJA.¹⁰

Labelling critics of Israel as antisemitic, as CIJA does, is a clear example of anti-Palestinian racism, as the 2022 Arab Canadian Lawyers Association (ACLA) framework (discussed further below) lays out. This phenomenon is not new. For a number of decades, the state of Israel has promoted the idea that critiques of Zionism and critique of Israeli state policies, laws, and practices constitute a “new” antisemitism, since Israel is a Jewish nation-state. Many pro-Israel Jewish lobby groups have adopted this framework and have been key players in silencing Palestinian political calls for liberation by naming this movement as antisemitic. This discourse around antisemitism has become particularly salient in the context of Israel’s ongoing genocidal campaign in Gaza as we are witnessing a heightened level of racism directed at expressions of Palestinian solidarity and Palestinian political and human rights in Canada.

Our research finds that CIJA has played a key role in this disturbing trend. CIJA claims to represent the views of 150,000 Jewish people in Canada through the Jewish Federations of Canada, out of a total Canadian Jewish population of approximately 335,000.¹¹ CIJA is often relied on by media and politicians to represent “the Jewish community” in Canada in the media and in government lobbying efforts.

This report reveals and exposes the harm caused by policy makers, the media, institutions, and legislatures when they adopt ideas, policies, and legal regulation that CIJA promotes in relation to the state of Israel.

Since the October 7, 2023, Hamas attack on Israel and Israel’s genocidal operation in Gaza, relentless assault on

the West Bank, and the ongoing humanitarian catastrophe that the state of Israel has generated, CIJA’s role on the national landscape has been amplified. We analyzed public statements made by CIJA between October 7, 2023, and March 29, 2024, including 1,625 posts made by the CIJA X (formerly Twitter) account, 40 official press releases published on the CIJA website, and 144 instances where CIJA staff or executives were quoted in the media. We sought to understand CIJA’s claims of antisemitism and to analyze their implications. We found that many of these claims promoted other forms of racism, where they conflated critiques of Israel with antisemitism. In this light, we assessed how, in the context of an Israeli genocide against Palestinian people, CIJA’s accusations of antisemitism aim to silence critique of Israeli violence against Palestinians.

Palestinians and their supporters in Canada have been threatened, subjected to increased policing, surveillance and doxxing, fired by employers, sanctioned by university administrators, and have been subjected to various forms of abuse, all of which is documented in several reports.¹² Our report adds to this documentation by recording the specific role played by CIJA in this disturbing trend.¹³

As a starting point for analysing anti-Palestinian racism (APR), this report relies on a framework for understanding this form of racism developed by the Arab Canadian Lawyers Association.¹⁴ Our methodology entailed analyzing CIJA’s public communications in order to qualitatively evaluate the prevalence of anti-Palestinian racism in CIJA’s claims to speak for Jewish Canadians

12 See for example: CJPME, *Anti-Palestinian Racism in Canada: 2023 Report*; Bascima Mosse and Sumara Sibery, *Anti-Palestinian Racism in Canada: 2024 Survey Report* (Palestinian Canadian Congress, March, 2025); David Mastracci, “A List of Some People in Canada Fired for Pro-Palestine Views,” *The Maple*, November, 10, 2023; Race Equity Caucus, York University, *Surveilled and Silenced: A Report on Palestine Solidarity at York University* (September, 2024).

13 Though it was beyond the scope of this project to analyze the ways that these attacks might disproportionately impact Black, Indigenous, and racialized people, what can be gleaned from our data is that CIJA’s activation of state apparatuses to combat antisemitism, including increased criminalization and securitization, reproduce structural racism. For analysis of the activation of state power by pro-Israel lobby groups in the context of criminal law and the ways this activation reproduces racism, see for example: Jillian Rogin, “Legislating Hate: Pro-Israel Advocacy and Hate Speech Criminalization in Canada,” *Journal for the Critical Study of Zionism* 1, no. 1 (Fall 2024): 1.

14 Dania Majid, *Anti-Palestinian Racism: Naming, Framing, and Manifestations* (Arab Canadian Lawyers Association, April, 2022), 17.

9 Ron Csillag, “Why are Jews so divided on M-103 and the term Islamophobia?” *Canadian Jewish News*, March 2, 2017.

10 For a detailed discussion of how pro-Israel lobby groups more broadly contribute to the promotion of Islamophobia in Canada, see: Jasmin Zine, *The Canadian Islamophobia Industry: Mapping Islamophobia’s Ecosystem in the Great White North* (Islamophobia Studies Center, 2022).

11 CIJA has made this claim to represent 150,000 Jewish people in Canada repeatedly, including to the *Standing House Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development*. StatCan last surveyed Jewish population numbers in 2021 and reported this figure.

and address antisemitism.¹⁵ This approach is based on our study focus, which is to understand the narratives that CIJA disseminates about Palestinians and their supporters in Canada, including many Jewish people, and to analyze whether and how these narratives both obscure and support genocidal violence.

Our study is grounded in an anti-racist approach that understands that all forms of racism are interconnected. As scholars of race and religion show, it is impossible to understand antisemitism, Islamophobia, anti-Palestinian racism and anti-Arab racism as entirely distinct concepts, because they are shaped by European imperialisms and by various forms of (now often secularized) Christian/white supremacy.¹⁶ It is also helpful to understand the basic relationship of anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim/anti-Arab¹⁷ movements historically. Jewish-Muslim antagonism, while portrayed as timeless, is actually a fairly recent European invention.¹⁸ This is supported by the well documented history of Jewish-Muslim cohabitation in many regions, where conflict arose and resolved, but was never a stable and unfixed aspect of the relationship.¹⁹ This history frames our current understanding of all racism as interdependent and connected. Consequently, it is not possible to address one form of racism by solidifying others.

Yet, our study found that CIJA frequently defines antisemitism in a way that relies on harmful depictions, assumptions, and characterizations of Palestinian people while simultaneously homogenizing Jewish people and erasing non-/anti-Zionist Jewish voices.²⁰

We found CIJA's public statements about Jewish people themselves to be antisemitic, including: claims that there is a singularity of Jewish opinion on issues such as Zionism and the relationship between Jewish people and the state of Israel; the repetition of a dual loyalty trope (that Jewish people owe special loyalty to Israel); and statements that Jewish identity is inextricably linked to Zionism.²¹ On a broader scale, these narratives, made in support of Israel's genocidal campaign, imply that genocidal violence against Palestinians constitutes an *essential part of Jewish identity*, and frame genocide as necessary for Jewish survival.²²

Critically, our study found that CIJA's public statements culminate in denying the genocide of Palestinians and the decimation of Palestine. Read collectively, CIJA's claims justify or minimize the mass killing and maiming of Palestinians as nothing more than a measured, proportionate, and necessary response to Hamas' political violence; CIJA conflates all Palestinians with the political violence Hamas commits, which then associates all Palestinians with "terrorism" and operates to justify genocide against an entire people.²³

This is particularly alarming, since our findings have also uncovered disturbing historic and ongoing claims made by CIJA to be a sole representative of Canadian Jewish voices. CIJA explicitly identifies itself as "*the official, representative organizational voice of the Jewish community*"

15 As noted in the ACLA report on anti-Palestinian racism, we recognize that Islamophobia and anti-Palestinian racism are often interrelated. The choice to focus on anti-Palestinian racism should be understood to include the ways that Islamophobia is often levied against Palestinians and comprises a critical component of anti-Palestinian racism.

16 Gil Anidjar, *The Jew, the Arab: A History of the Enemy* (Stanford University Press, June, 2003); Anidjar, "Muslim Jews," *Qui Parle* 18, no. 1 (2009): 1–23; Anidjar, *Semites: Race, Religion, Literature* (Stanford University Press, October, 2007); Talal Asad, "The Concept of Cultural Translation in British Social Anthropology," in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, ed. James Clifford and George E. Marcus (University of California Press, October, 2010), 141–64; Talal Asad, *Secular Translations: Nation-State, Modern Self, and Calculative Reason* (Columbia University Press, December, 2018).

17 Anti-Arab racism often converges with Islamophobia but it has been, and often is, directed at Christians, Jews, and other people who identify or are perceived or identified by others as Arab.

18 Anidjar, *The Jew, the Arab*; Anidjar, "Muslim Jews,,"; Anidjar, *Semites*.

19 David M. Freidenreich, *Jewish Muslims: How Christians Imagined Islam as the Enemy* (University of California Press, January, 2023). See also, Mo Pareles and Braden Russell, "Antisemitism, Islamophobia, and Racism: A Long View" (2025), forthcoming in *Religion Compass*; draft on file with the authors of this report.

20 Judith Butler, in Jewish Voice for Peace, *On Antisemitism: Solidarity and the Struggle for Justice* (Haymarket Books, April, 2017), ix.

21 Itamar Mann and Lihi Yona, "Defending Jews from the Definition of Antisemitism," *UCLA Law Review* 71 (2024): 1150.

22 The ways in which pro-Israel lobby groups attempt to shape Jewish identity towards Zionism and in this current moment, as in favour of genocide, is part of the ongoing PhD research of Jillian Rogin, one of the authors of this report.

23 The label of terrorism has enabled state sponsored "counter-terrorism" initiatives that target racialized people and in particular, Arab and Muslim people for surveillance, detention, deportation, and other gross infringements of civil liberties and the term itself ought to be reconsidered. See for example: Reem Bahdi and Fahad Ahmad, "Why charging incels with terrorism may make matters worse" *The Conversation Canada*, June 16, 2020. See also Zine, *The Canadian Islamophobia Industry*.

of Canada.”²⁴ It further claims to be “the community’s primary vehicle for Jewish community advocacy efforts, helping to improve the quality of Jewish life in Canada and strengthen the Canada-Israel relationship.”

And yet, not a single person within CIJA has ever been elected to represent Jewish people. Rather, CIJA is an advocacy agency that works on behalf of Jewish Federations of Canada - United Israel Appeal. Jewish people who opt to be members of various Jewish institutions, such as Jewish community centres in Canada that are affiliated with Jewish federations, may not even be aware that they are represented by CIJA’s advocacy, or that a portion of their membership dues to JFCs is allocated to CIJA.²⁵

Since CIJA does not have formal membership, its claims to represent Jewish people or communities in Canada is gravely undermined. Further, we have serious additional concerns with CIJA’s claims to represent Jewish people in Canada, since the organization fails to account for organized Jewish *opposition* to CIJA’s political positions.²⁶

In summation, analysis of our data reveals:

- 01. CIJA promotes anti-Palestinian racism through the idea that unrestricted violence against Palestinians is necessary for Jewish safety.**
- 02. CIJA promotes anti-Palestinian racism through a false narrative linking the movement for Palestinian rights and the rise of antisemitism in Canada.**
- 03. CIJA engages in antisemitism by defining Jewish identity as Zionist and anti-Palestinian through its persistent exclusion of large segments of Jewish people and voices from a singularly presented “Jewish community.”**
- 04. CIJA’s advocacy for the erosion of free speech,**

academic freedom, and increased securitization and criminalization is used to silence criticism of Israel and the genocide of Palestinians.

Due to the prevalence of racism in CIJA’s public statements, which operates to justify genocide, we recommend the following:

- ☐ **Given the evidence of CIJA’s racism, we recommend that educational institutions, governments, and other organizations do not invite CIJA to do antisemitism training and talks, or to give evidence or to consult on antisemitism;**
- ☐ **Journalists should exercise caution before asking CIJA to speak on issues relating to antisemitism, Israel and Palestine, and issues relating to Jewish people in Canada;**
- ☐ **The general public should exercise caution, avoiding reliance on, or trusting information arising from CIJA as a representative voice of Jewish people in Canada;**
- ☐ **Law and policy makers, and law enforcement officers, should decline to engage CIJA on issues related to antisemitism, Israel and Palestine, and issues relating to Jewish people in Canada;**
- ☐ **No public funding should be allocated to CIJA to undertake antiracist work including antisemitism training.**

Perhaps it is unsurprising that CIJA’s framing of the situation ultimately endorses Israeli state violence against Palestinians. The strengthening of the relationship between Canada and Israel is one of CIJA’s stated priorities. What is surprising and worthy of interrogation is the way that institutions in Canada, including government, law enforcement, media, school boards, and universities have remained responsive to CIJA. This report raises serious questions about how CIJA has manufactured consent for Israel’s human rights violations — an ongoing illegal military occupation, ethnic cleansing, apartheid, and genocide — and the willingness of many institutions to collaborate in this project.

It is our hope that governments, school boards, politicians, law makers, law enforcement, non-profit organizations, non-governmental organizations, and others will be able to make more informed choices about who is called upon to speak as representatives of Jewish people in Canada and to question CIJA’s allegiance to state power and ethnic nationalism.

24 This is drawn from CIJA’s registration of the organization, as submitted to the Officer of the Commissioner of Lobbying of Canada, *emphasis added*.

25 CIJA, “How is CIJA Funded?”

26 For evidence of a diversity of Jewish opinion in Canada, see for example: JSpace Canada, the New Israel Fund of Canada, and Canadian Friends of Peace Now, Arguments for the Sake of Heaven: A Jewish Community Divided, December, 2024. For an example of challenges to pro-Israel lobby groups’ claims to speak on behalf of Jewish Canadians, see: Bailey Greenspon, Jonathan Sas, and Sam Hersch, “We Are Progressive Jews Who Have Been Let Down by Our Community Leaders,” *Toronto Star*, October 21, 2024.

As Jewish authors, we understand that genocide denial is a uniquely dangerous act. The longstanding denial of eliminatory violence against Palestinians, specifically the Nakba, continues and it is the very denial of it by groups like CIJA that allows it to perpetuate. **We have devoted more than a year of collective effort to analyzing and coming to grips with this unacceptable situation.** This work includes important recommendations to hopefully, at least in part, redress CIJA's harmful interventions in the public sphere in Canada.

Introduction and Background

We are a group of Jewish academics in Canada. All of us have been gravely concerned about Palestinian life, survival, and justice for decades, including in the current political moment as we witness a genocide undertaken by the state of Israel against Palestinians, supposedly committed in the name of Jewish safety.²⁷

We were moved to do this research because we share a deep concern about the public statements of one particular pro-Israel lobby group that represents itself and is often mistakenly regarded as *the* voice of the Jewish community in Canada – the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA).

Motivated by deep concern about the ongoing genocidal violence levied against Palestinians and escalations of violence perpetrated by the state of Israel in the region, we reject the proposition that this violence can in any way be justified in the name of Jewish safety. Genocide makes no one safe and CIJA does not speak for all Jews in its claims to be a representative Jewish voice in Canada. As our report details, CIJA promotes various forms of racism that, taken together, help promote and justify genocide.

CIJA's defense of the ongoing Israeli genocide of Palestinians is clear and the urgency of challenging its narrative has never been so pressing. Palestinian people in Gaza are being subjected to forced starvation. The United Nations reported that 1 in 5 Gazans, or 500,000 people are currently on the brink of starvation.²⁸ In April of 2025, *Al Jazeera* reported that since Oct. 7, 2023, Israel's attacks have killed more than 61,000 Palestinians in Gaza, including close to 18,000 children; over 900 Palestinians have been killed in the West Bank, including 181 children (in a number of cases by settler violence); 92 percent of all housing infrastructure in Gaza has been damaged; 80 percent of all commercial facilities have been damaged; 68 percent of all cropland has been damaged; 50 percent of Gazan hospitals are only partially functional; 68 percent of road networks in Gaza have been damaged; and 88 percent of schools in Gaza have been damaged.²⁹ All of Gaza's universities or institutions of higher learning have been decimated.³⁰ Donald Trump's administration is discussing a plan to permanently relocate (ethnically cleanse) one million Gazans to Libya by forcing them to leave Gaza.³¹

When it comes to public expressions of racism, as Jews we say: *one is too many*. We studied and rigorously analyzed all public statements by CIJA for the five month period following October 7, 2023 (October 7, 2023 - March 29, 2024).

27 We take for granted that Israeli state violence directed at Palestinian people in Gaza is indeed accurately described as genocide. This view is supported by multiple international legal experts, human rights organizations, and genocide scholars, and this description accords with what Palestinians have been reporting on and live streaming as they document the Israeli state violence pervading Gaza. For Palestinian coverage, see for example: Palestine Centre for Human Rights, Cultural Genocide, Aug. 26, 2024; Addameer, Arrests and imprisonment are on extension of the crime of genocide, 2024; Defense for Children International Palestine, "We are alive and dead at the same time": Firsthand accounts from children surviving Israel's genocide, Aug. 6, 2025; Al-Haq, "How to Hide a Genocide: The Role of Evacuation Orders and Safe Zones in Israel's Genocidal Campaign in Gaza," Jan 2025. See also: Amnesty International, Amnesty International Concludes Israel Is Committing Genocide against Palestinians in Gaza, December 5, 2024; United Nations General Assembly, Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, UN Doc A/79/363 (2024); Francesca Albanese, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Palestinian Territories Occupied Since 1967: Genocide as Colonial Erasure, UN Doc A/79/384 (2024); International Court of Justice, Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel), Order of 26 January 2024; University Network for Human Rights, Genocide in Gaza: Analysis of International Law and Its Application to Israel's Military Actions since October 7, 2023, 2023; Marc Lynch and Shibley Telhami, "Academic Self-Censorship Under Trump: The Latest Middle East Scholar Barometer Findings," University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll; Raz Segal, "A Textbook Case of Genocide," *Jewish Currents*, October 13, 2023; Austin Fisher, "Holocaust Scholar to his conclusion that Gaza campaign constitutes genocide," *Source NM*, September 24, 2024; Islam Dogru, "American Jewish scholar says Israel has launched 'genocidal campaign of extermination' in Gaza," *A4*, February 22, 2024; Daniel Blatman, "There's no Auschwitz in Gaza. But it's Still Genocide," *Ha'aretz* (January 30, 2025); Lee Mordechai, "Bearing Witness to the Israel Gaza War," (March, 2025).

28 United Nations, "Gaza: Starvation Looms for 1 in 5 People, Say Food Security Experts," *UN News*, May 12, 2025.

29 AJL Labs, "Israel-Gaza War in Maps and Charts: Live Tracker," *Al Jazeera*, April 17, 2025.

30 Huda Skaik, "Students and Teachers in Gaza: 'Education Itself Is a Form of Defiance,'" *The Intercept*, May 17, 2025.

31 Jerusalem Post Staff and Reuters, "U.S. Developing a Plan to Move One Million Palestinians to Libya, NBS News Reports," *The Jerusalem Post*, May 16, 2025.

What we found was shocking and disturbing: a pattern of anti-Palestinian racism, dehumanization of Palestinians, the silencing of Palestinians, their allies, their supporters, including dissenting Jewish voices, and continuous claims by CIJA to represent the views of “the” Jewish people in Canada. All this in the service of denying the genocide that the state of Israel was — and is — carrying out in Gaza.

One initial example: in a since-deleted tweet by @CIJAinfo, CIJA claimed that “ Hamas murderers are facing justice in Gaza.”³² This comment was posted in response to the killing of approximately 400 Palestinian people including women and children. The statement conflates all Palestinians with “ Hamas,” implying that death was deserving since “ justice” was done. As this report reveals, this kind of statement was not an isolated post, but is in keeping with CIJA’s pattern of vilification of the entire Palestinian people.

In this context, it is notable that CIJA was a main proponent lobbying for the enactment of s.319(2.1) of the *Criminal Code*, which criminalizes Holocaust denial in Canada under the heading “ Wilful Promotion of Antisemitism.”³³ The Holocaust is now the *only* genocide for which denial is a criminal offence. As this report makes clear, genocide denial, according to CIJA, ought only to be denounced and criminalized when the genocide in question relates to the Holocaust.

As Jewish authors, we understand that genocide denial is a uniquely dangerous act. The longstanding denial of eliminatory violence against Palestinians, specifically the Nakba, continues and it is the very denial of it by groups like CIJA that allows it to perpetuate. We have devoted more than a year of collective effort to analyzing and coming to grips with this unacceptable situation. This work includes important recommendations to hopefully, at least in part, redress CIJA’s harmful interventions in the public sphere in Canada.

WHY CIJA: THE REASON FOR FOCUSING ON A SINGLE (JEWISH) ORGANIZATION

The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs is a non-profit organization that purports to advocate for Jewish life and rights in Canada. With a mission to “ protect the quality of Jewish life in Canada through advocacy,” CIJA’s stated priority areas include combating antisemitism, strengthening the Canada-Israel “ friendship,” and protecting the quality of Jewish life.³⁴ The work of CIJA is summarized on their website as follows:

Working in partnership with Jewish Federations and non-federated Jewish communities, CIJA identifies issues important to Canada’s Jewish community. CIJA then designs and implements strategies to ensure that leaders in government, media, civil society, business, and academia understand the Jewish perspective and that it is considered in Canada’s public policy discussion.³⁵

Our purpose in examining and highlighting CIJA is to analyse CIJA’s claims to speak on behalf of all Jewish people in Canada in its efforts to address what it calls antisemitism, and to expose the racism it often espouses towards these ends. Both of these phenomena have intensified since Oct. 7, 2023.

All levels of government and many Canadian institutions often rely on CIJA and other pro-Israel lobby groups to act as “ the voice” of the Jewish community, despite the fact that many Jewish organizations and communal institutions categorically reject its position on Israel.³⁶ This reliance should tell us as much about Canadian institutions and government as it does about CIJA.³⁷ The point here is to examine CIJA with a view to understanding how its position on Israel and antisemitism,

34 Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, “ Who We Are – The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs.”

35 CIJA, “ Who We Are.”

36 Examples of Jewish organizations in Canada that have taken positions on Israel and Palestine that differ dramatically from CIJA’s include the Jewish Faculty Network, Independent Jewish Voices, the United Jewish People’s Order, and IfNotNow Canada.

37 For analysis of the symbiosis of pro-Israel lobbying and Canadian state interests in the context of criminal law and hate speech legislation, see: Rogin, *Legislating Hate: Pro-Israel Advocacy and Hate Speech Criminalization in Canada.*

32 Sam Hersch (@SamHersch), responding to @CIJAinfo, quoting CIJA’s original post (now deleted), X (formerly Twitter), March 18, 2025. This post did not comprise part of our dataset as it was posted outside the dates set for this report.

33 R.S.C., 1985, c. C-46; Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, “ Criminalization of Holocaust Denial.” May 3, 2022.

despite rising dissent, promotes rather than confronts racism and to problematize institutional reliance on CIJA.

While pro-Israel lobby groups like CIJA play a prominent role in supporting policies of the state of Israel and silencing critiques, the report nevertheless identifies tensions in an overly narrow focus on the role of Jewish-led pro-Israel advocacy in suppressing Palestinian solidarity.

First, examining the actions of Israel's Jewish supporters has the potential to detract from the structures of violence that enable the state of Israel to continue its racist campaign against Palestinians.

Zionism, having aligned itself historically with Soviet and Western imperial powers, relies today on the support of the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and many other Global North states. The role of organizations like CIJA, while pervasive in public advocacy, does not fully explain or account for the success of Israeli settler-colonialism on Palestinian land, nor should it be interpreted as such.

Second, overemphasizing CIJA's role can reinforce a false and racist narrative that Jewish-led organizations have more power than other groups because they are Jewish, as opposed to other factors such as resources, access to the political mainstream, and alignment of their lobby efforts with Canadian corporate and state interests.

CIJA's ability to wield power and influence has nothing to do with mythical Jewish influence, nor with the power to erect a world state under Jewish rule, for example.³⁸ We reject characterizations that invoke long-standing antisemitic tropes about Jewish conspiracies.

The fact that CIJA was established by a small group of prominent Jewish pro-Israel individuals who engineered a hostile takeover of the Canadian Jewish Congress (as we will see) has no relation to racist fantasies about Jewish power.³⁹ It is a fact that this group of founders benefitted

from stature and resources to exert this influence. Their continuing outsized influence, however, is not *because of* Jewish identity writ large — the conspiratorial trope of global Jewish hegemony — but rather by the orientation of their Jewish identity towards a political commitment to Zionism and its alignment with state and elite interests. CIJA's attendant access to political and financial resources combined with an advocacy approach that underscores “shared values” between Canada and Israel, enables them to wield disproportionate power within decision-making circles.⁴⁰

Third, while we are critical of CIJA's claims to advocate for Jewish people in Canada, we reject the framings of CIJA's interventions on the Canadian political landscape as those of “foreign agents” or as indicative of “foreign interference.”⁴¹

As Hil Aked has articulated, these characterizations are,

potentially xenophobic in tone. They risk playing into the notion of ‘dual loyalty’, an erroneous idea resting on a problematic expectation of undivided patriotic deference to the authority of a single nation-state. We ought to reject this idea wholesale. Instead, we should celebrate a world in which people's attachments and solidarities are multiple and cross borders, while questioning and challenging all allegiances to state power and nationalism.⁴²

It is our hope that governments, school boards, politicians, law makers, law enforcement, non-profit and non-governmental organizations, and others will be able to make more informed choices about who is called upon to speak as representatives of Jewish people in Canada and to question CIJA's allegiance to state power and ethnic nationalism.

[ada-Israel Alliance](#)” *Canadian Dimension*, October 29, 2006.

40 For discussion of this approach and its adoption by various prior iterations of CIJA, see: Freeman-Maloy, “Organizing the Canada-Israel Alliance”.

41 One example of CIJA's interventions framed as “foreign interference” is an article written by Fareed Khan where he argues that in Canada's inquiry into foreign interference, groups like CIJA should be included. See Fareed Khan, “[Israeli Influence on Canadian politics is a prime example of foreign interference](#),” *Rabble*, December 23, 2024.

42 Aked, *Friends of Israel*, 26.

38 Richard Landes and Steven T. Katz, eds., *The Paranoid Apocalypse: A Hundred-Year Retrospective on The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (New York University Press, December, 2012).

39 David Noble et al., “The New Israel Lobby in Action,” *Canadian Dimension: For People Who Want to Change the World*, November 1, 2005. See also: Dan Freeman-Maloy, “[Organizing the Can-](#)

By studying CIJA, this inquiry foregrounds analysis of *Canadian complicity* in Israeli human rights abuses and war crimes, and their role in furthering anti-Palestinian racism, Islamophobia, and systemic racism in Canadian government and institutions.⁴³ CIJA is one of the most active lobbying groups on Parliament Hill, logging 94 communications with Canadian Government officials between September 18, 2024, and February 28, 2025.⁴⁴ Only a handful of other organizations had higher tallies.⁴⁵ Not all lobby groups, no matter how powerful, enjoy the successes in terms of influence that CIJA has historically enjoyed. Therefore, to examine CIJA is to raise questions about why Canadian institutions are listening to CIJA and how CIJA continues to gain the ear of those in power.

In addition, CIJA has been an active proponent of monitoring, surveillance, and criminalization of pro-Palestinian solidarity actions across the country. These efforts also align with Canada's increasing allocation of resources towards strengthening national security infrastructure and state powers of enforcement. Questions persist as to how these security threats are defined and the systemic biases that influence their interpretation. CIJA has been advocating vigorously at the federal and provincial levels to revise the meaning and definitions of "hate crime" so that it includes criticism of Israel.⁴⁶

Focusing on CIJA also opens up a wider frame for Jewish advocacy in Canada. Part of CIJA's messaging attempts to erase dissenting Jewish voices as it continually claims to be the leading voice of Jewish people in Canada. For us, there needs to be a focus on what CIJA is claiming to say *on behalf* of Jewish people in Canada as well as

an intervention to disrupt and denounce the inaccurate and misleading notion that there is a single monolithic Jewish community in Canada. The idea that Jews owe unconditional loyalty to the state of Israel must be challenged. The authors of this report are Jewish and identify with a long and robust Jewish history that includes critiques of Zionism, ethno-nationalism, and the continued oppression of Palestinians.⁴⁷

Jewish people in Canada are not a monolith and no group can credibly claim to speak for "the" Jewish community. Politicians, school boards, law enforcement and others need to understand who it is they rely upon to speak about antisemitism and whether these groups uphold basic principles of antiracism.

As outlined above, "it is impossible to understand antisemitism, Islamophobia, and anti-Arab racism in separation."⁴⁸ Moreover, antisemitism is structurally key to a long history of racism and colonialism.

This report should not be seen as centering mere disagreements between a Jewish pro-Israel lobby group and dissenting Jewish voices. This is not an internal debate within various Jewish communities. Rather, it aims to focus attention on the harms enabled by CIJA's work as documented in this report. As CIJA is an organization that claims to represent the voices of 150,000 Jewish Canadians, and is often relied upon as a representative voice of Jewish people, it is crucial to understand the ways in which CIJA promotes ideas, policies, and legal regulation that are inconsistent with Canada's commitments to human rights and engages in forms of racism that are currently helping to authorize a genocide.

WHAT IS CIJA?

Though CIJA claims on its website to represent "*diverse* perspectives and concerns of Jewish community members" (*emphasis added*), its advocacy represents a very narrow band of opinion. Through intensive lobbying at

43 For discussion on the role of pro-Israel lobby groups in promoting Islamophobia in Canada, including CIJA, see: Zine, *The Canadian Islamophobia Industry*. For discussion on Canada's complicity in Israeli human rights abuses, furthering anti-Palestinian racism and Islamophobia, see for example: Jeremy Wildeman and Muhannad Ayyash, eds., *Canada as a Settler Colony on the Question of Palestine* (University of Alberta Press, October, 2023); Emily Regan Wills, Jeremy Wildeman, Michael Bueckert, and Nadia Abu-Zahra, eds., *Advocating for Palestine in Canada: Histories, Movements, Action* (Fernwood Publishing, May, 2022).

44 Office of the Commissioner of Lobbying of Canada, "The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs/Le Centre consultatif des relations juives et israéliennes/Noah Shack, Interim President – 12-Month Lobbying Summary."

45 The three organizations with higher tallies include: The Canadian Medical Association (182), Canadian Bankers Association (129) and Rogers Communication (112).

46 Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, "Modernizing the Federal Security Infrastructure Program."

47 See, for example: Molly Crabapple, "The War on Memory: Learning from the Jewish Labor Bund," *The Funambulist Magazine*, December, 2024; Shaul Magid, *The Necessity of Exile: Essays from a Distance*, (Ayin Press, November, 2023); Daniel Boyarin, *The No-State Solution* (Yale University Press, January, 2023).

48 Parales and Russell, *Antisemitism, Islamophobia, and Racism: A Long View*, 3.

all levels of governments, school boards, law enforcement agencies, universities, and other institutions, CIJA's work has primarily focused on strengthening support for the state of Israel, especially by promoting the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance working definition of antisemitism (IHRA).⁴⁹

In line with its mandate to strengthen the Canada-Israel friendship, CIJA plays a prominent role in shaping perspectives, policies, laws, and discourse that closely align with Israeli state interests.

Though officially formed in 2011, iterations of the current organization called CIJA trace back to 2002. That year, Concordia University students demonstrated against then former (and later returned) Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu who was invited to give a public lecture at their institution. When the students successfully prevented the event from taking place, concern about an escalation in Palestine solidarity activism led to a significant shift in Jewish pro-Israel advocacy in Canada.⁵⁰

Highly disturbed by the student activism, the United Israel Appeal Federations Canada (UIAFC) brought together a group of Jewish pro-Israel business leaders in Canada to formulate an offensive against the Palestine solidarity movement. Included in an initial meeting were business leaders Israel Asper, CEO of CanWest Global; Gerry Schwartz, CEO of Onex; Heather Reisman, CEO of Indigo/Chapters Books; Sylvain Abitbol, CEO of NHC Communications Inc.; and Larry Tanenbaum, co-owner of the Toronto Maple Leafs.⁵¹ Organized as an "Israel emergency cabinet," this group became an umbrella organization that eventually brought both the Canadian Jewish Congress and the Canada Israel Committee under its control. Its overarching goal was to increase the funding for Israel advocacy and to transform these efforts into a more "proactive" form of influence.⁵² The emergency

cabinet eventually transformed into the "Canadian Council for Israel and Jewish Advocacy," and in 2011, it became the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA). The creation of CIJA was controversial within many Jewish communities and organizations in Canada, including the Canada Israel Committee. As the former Québec chair of the Canada Israel Committee stated, "This is a group of self-appointed people who have very little linkage with the Jewish [masses] and they have private agendas of their own."⁵³ Its formation was described by Jewish observers as a "hostile takeover" of other Jewish organizations, as well as a "coup d'état."⁵⁴ Some from the Canadian Jewish Congress report they felt they had no choice but to support the demands to form a new committee that would overtake their work.⁵⁵ Franklin Bialystok, a Canadian Jewish historian, noted that in 2010 and 2011, "promises were made ... that human rights would remain a central pillar of CIJA and that senior staff at Congress would remain part of CIJA ... [but] none of these promises were kept."⁵⁶

The takeover of Jewish community organizations was also seen at the time by some as an attempt to manufacture an image of a monolithic Jewish community and to stifle dissent. As David Noble stated,

In the eyes of some Jews...the formation and agenda of the CIJA, which even in its name conflated the term Jewish with Israel, constituted a threat not only to Jewish critics of Israel, but also to Jewish moderates, a hijacking of Jewish identity in Canada...⁵⁷

As the "advocacy agent of Canada's Jewish Federations," CIJA derives its core funding from Jewish Federations through Jewish Federations of Canada - United Israel Appeal.⁵⁸ It is not clear whether people who donate to Jewish Federations in Canada are aware that their money funds CIJA. Unlike the Canadian Jewish Congress, which held regular elections, was guided by a constitution, and

49 International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, "What Is Antisemitism?"

50 This shift in advocacy was aligned with a similar shift in Israeli policy and practice. This will be discussed in more detail below under the heading "CIJA's Alignment with Israeli State Hasbara (Propaganda)." See also: Daniel Freeman-Maloy, "Organizing the Canada-Israel Alliance," *Canadian Dimension*, October 29, 2006; Daniel Freeman-Maloy, "AIPAC North," *ZNet*, June 26, 2006.

51 David Noble et al., "The New Israel Lobby in Action," *Canadian Dimension*, November 1, 2005.

52 Noble et al., "The New Israel Lobby In Action."

53 Noble et al., "The New Israel Lobby in Action."

54 Noble et al., "The New Israel Lobby In Action."

55 Jodie Shupac, "Historian laments demise of Canadian Jewish Congress," *The Canadian Jewish News*, September 16, 2016.

56 Shupac, "Historian laments demise of Canadian Jewish Congress."

57 Noble et al., "The New Israel Lobby In Action."

58 Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, "How Is CIJA Funded?"

had clear membership, CIJA's governance structure is opaque.⁵⁹ CIJA's lack of accountability is complicated by its budget, which CIJA has refused to disclose to the press. It has been estimated that CIJA spends between \$8-11 million CAD annually, with 40 percent on Israel advocacy.⁶⁰

CIJA'S ALIGNMENT WITH ISRAELI STATE HASBARA (PROPAGANDA)

In the early 2000s, the second Intifada saw a strengthening of Palestinian solidarity and related activism, including burgeoning support for the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI) launched in 2004.⁶¹ The backlash to PACBI was severe, as the state of Israel and its supporters ramped up efforts to promote and protect Israeli state interests.⁶²

The state of Israel responded to international boycott campaigns in the early 2000s by increasing its efforts to conflate anti-Zionism and critiques of Israel with antisemitism. In 2005, the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs launched the "Brand Israel" campaign which was an attempt to improve Israel's image as a state committed to women's rights, LGBTQ+ rights, cultural diversity, and to highlight Israel's achievements in science and technology.⁶³ Joint projects between Israel and pro-Israel organizations also increased. Examples include the introduction of Hasbara fellowships that funded students to parrot pro-Israel propaganda on U.S. campuses as well as the establishment of "StandWithUs," an organization whose mission is to "support Israel" and fight antisemitism.⁶⁴

There have also been a number of organizations formed in Canada and elsewhere that, while not overtly connected to the state of Israel, are distinctly pro-Israel in agenda and mandate while claiming to fight antisemitism. These organizations, while presenting themselves as grassroots and anti-racist in orientation, are often heavily funded groups that employ a number of tactics to promote Israeli interests. Aked describes this type of structure within the pro-Israel movement as "social movement from above."⁶⁵ CIJA fits this description.

As an organization that claims to be a representative voice of the "Jewish community" but has no formal membership, it has no direct connection to community, and is heavily resourced, CIJA is not a grassroots movement dedicated to human rights and anti-racism but rather is a social movement from above that advocates for the state of Israel.

Due to a lack of transparency about its governing structure, it is not clear the extent to which CIJA works directly or indirectly with the Israeli government or Israeli government officials.⁶⁶ However, it is clear that CIJA's work often mimics that of the Israeli state and parrots Israeli state propaganda, such as claiming that the boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) movement is antisemitic,⁶⁷ encourages violence against Jewish people and discriminates against Jews, and is a "tripwire" into antisemitism that "singles out" Israel (a purported form of antisemitism).⁶⁸ The positions that CIJA has consistently taken with respect to BDS and its framing of critique of Israel as antisemitic follows neatly within the above noted practices and policies espoused by Israeli state and non-state actors in the 2000s.

59 Daniel J. Elazar, Michael Brown, and Ira Robinson, eds, *Not Written in Stone: Jews Constitutions, and Constitutionalism in Canada*, (University of Ottawa Press, 2003) 172.

60 Andrew Cohen, "Canadian Jews Should Ask Lobby Group Some Tough Questions," *Ottawa Citizen*, February 13, 2018.

61 BDS Movement, "Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel,"

62 Aked, *Friends of Israel*.

63 Aked, *Friends of Israel*, 37, 39.

64 Aked, *Friends of Israel*, 42. The mission of StandWithUs can be found on their [website](#). See also: Saree Makdisi, *Tolerance Is a Wasteland: Palestine and the Culture of Denial* (University of California Press, April, 2022).

65 Aked, *Friends of Israel*, 15-18. Here Aked also introduces concepts such as the 'state-private networks' and 'manufactured civil society' to describe pro-Israel lobby groups in the diaspora.

66 Israeli state attempts to improve Israel's image, counter BDS and other forms of protest, and conflate critiques of the state with antisemitism are often done in concert with pro-Israel lobby groups in the diaspora. As Hil Aked describes: "Using tactics reminiscent of South African apartheid and Cold War propaganda, it has sought to indirectly fund pro-Israel civil society groups through an arms-length body called Kela Shlomo and collaborate[s] with wealthy supporters of Israel. See: Aked, *Friends of Israel*, 35.

67 The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, "Myths: BDS Is a Peaceful Movement,"

68 The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, "Resources to Combat BDS,"

DEFINING ANTISEMITISM

The data that we have culled from CIJA's communications in the aftermath of the Hamas attacks of October 7 indicate an intensification of the decades-long strategy on the part of Israel and the institutional Canadian Jewish community to silence Israel's critics by casting criticism of Israel and Zionism as antisemitic. The belief that strong criticism of Israel constitutes a "new antisemitism" emerged in the 1970s as a response to the growth of international condemnation of Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories.

A prominent proponent of this view is Irwin Cotler, Canada's former Special Envoy for Holocaust Remembrance and the Fight Against Antisemitism. Cotler is credited with coining the widely quoted expression that Israel has become "the collective Jew among the nations."⁶⁹ This characterization of criticism of Israel as a new form of antisemitism has been foundational to mainstream pro-Israel groups' attacks on Palestine solidarity worldwide. In Cotler's view, Israel is the state of all Jews and to vilify the state or disparage its founding ideology, Zionism, is to vilify or disparage all Jews. However, as British philosopher Brian Klug has argued, "anti-Zionism and antisemitism are in fact independent variables: one can exist without the other."⁷⁰

Deciding which actions and expressions constitute antisemitism rests fundamentally on how antisemitism is understood. Since 2016, there have been vigorous efforts by pro-Israel Jewish organizations worldwide as well as Israeli governmental bodies to persuade governments and civil institutions to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Working Definition of Antisemitism (IHRA). Developed originally as a research tool for calculating levels of antisemitism in Europe in the early 2000s, the IHRA working definition is promoted by its supporters (including CIJA) as the world's most authoritative definition of antisemitism. What renders the definition most controversial is the inclusion of eleven examples of antisemitism, seven of which either explicitly

or implicitly identify the state of Israel as pivotal to defining what is, and is not, antisemitic.⁷¹

These examples are interpreted and weaponized to mischaracterize vigorous opposition to Israeli policies toward Palestinians as a continuation of centuries of anti-Jewish hatred rather than a political response to Israeli settler-colonialism including land theft, ethnic cleansing, apartheid, occupation, and the current genocidal assault on Gaza.

The IHRA working definition is thus contested and controversial and has been rejected by educators, lawyers, and the human rights sector out of concern for its use in silencing criticism of Israel. The Canadian Association of University Teachers, representing 70,000 academic workers, has rejected the IHRA definition,⁷² along with faculty associations across the world. Eleven human rights organizations in Israel⁷³ alone, as well as Human Rights Watch⁷⁴ and Amnesty International⁷⁵ have rejected the IHRA definition. There is, furthermore, no consensus in the Jewish community or among Jewish studies scholars about how to define antisemitism. This overly broad definition has been vigorously opposed by leading Jewish scholars, including by an author of the IHRA definition himself, who never intended it to be weaponized against freedom of speech on university campuses.⁷⁶

Since the October 7 attacks and the subsequent unprecedented outcry against Israel's genocide, the mainstream Jewish pro-Israel institutions have significantly

69 Lerman, *Whatever Happened to Antisemitism?*, 118.

70 Brian Klug, "The Collective Jew: Israel and the New Antisemitism," *Patterns of Prejudice* 37, no. 2 (2003): 11.

71 The IHRA definition even without the examples has been criticized and is controversial. See for example: Jan Deckers and Jonathan Coulter, "What is Wrong with the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's Definition of Antisemitism?," *Res Publica* 28 (2022): 1-24. However, in terms of Palestine solidarity and the conflation of anti-Zionism with antisemitism, the examples are most problematic.

72 Canadian Association of University Teachers, Motions from the 91st CAUT Council Meeting, November 25-26, 2021; CAUT, Motion from 97th Council Meeting, November 29-30, 2024.

73 Israeli Human Rights Organizations, Joint Statement by Human Rights Organizations in Israel, June 7, 2023.

74 Human Rights Watch, "UN: More Groups to Address Antisemitism Issue," April 20, 2023.

75 Amnesty International, "UN Must Respect Human Rights While Combatting Antisemitism," April 17, 2023.

76 Kenneth Stern, "I wrote a definition of antisemitism. It was never meant to chill free speech" *The Boston Globe*, February 15, 2024.

amplified allegations of antisemitic intent against those protesting the war on Gaza. This strategy has long been the subject of fierce debate both within and outside the Jewish community. As commentator Antony Lerman argues, “confusion and disagreement have never been greater about who is antisemitic, what antisemitism is today, what its sources are, how it manifests itself, who is responsible for it and what to do about it.”⁷⁷

Yet for a significant number of scholars and activists, among them many Jews, the allegation that criticism of Israel automatically constitutes antisemitism represents a strategy to suppress free speech on Palestinian human rights.

This is not to deny that some critics of Israel unquestionably and reprehensibly express their criticism through historically antisemitic tropes (“Jews control the media,” “Jews are more loyal to Israel than to their countries of citizenship,” etc.). These expressions must be distinguished from legitimate criticism of a country that has long suppressed Palestinians, Palestinian civil society organizations, and their supporters, who have criticized and/or endured an “apartheid” regime.⁷⁸ Criticism of Israel can intersect with antisemitism when it employs classic antisemitic tropes or holds Jews, by virtue of their Jewishness, responsible for Israel’s actions. These expressions should not and must not be tolerated. However, as the 350 signatories to the Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism — among them the world’s most respected scholars of Jewish studies, antisemitism, and the Holocaust assert — it is not inherently antisemitic to reject the Zionist view of a state in which Jewish rights supersede Palestinian rights within the context of a self-described “democratic state.”⁷⁹

Several pro-Israel organizations worldwide collect data and disseminate reports documenting antisemitic incidents and levels of antisemitism. The North American Jewish community is divided over the accuracy of these reports and many question their credibility. When political activity and expressions of anti-Israel or pro-Palestine sentiment are believed to constitute antisemitism, the potential for exaggerating the threat of antisemitism and fanning the flames of anti-Palestinian, anti-Arab and anti-Muslim sentiment is great.

In Canada, pro-Israel advocates such as CIJA and B’nai Brith Canada have manufactured a moral panic around antisemitism by vilifying pro-Palestine protesters and by promoting a dangerous and misleading equivalency between pre-WWII antisemitism in Germany and the widespread opposition to Israel’s unbearably brutal assault on Gaza. In B’nai Brith Canada’s 2024 Audit of Antisemitic Incidents, Richard Robertson, the organization’s Director of Research and Advocacy claims that,

Since the Oct. 7, 2023 Hamas-led terror attack on Israel, Canada has been held hostage by a virulent minority of divisive radicals...The near omnipresent nature of antisemitism in Canada during the past year has meant that no Jew in Canada is immune from the wrath of this odious scourge...Our nation’s morals and values are being brought into question by the perverse actions of a repugnant few. We cannot allow for our Canada to be corrupted any further.⁸⁰

We have indeed witnessed indefensible and terrifying antisemitic vandalism carried out on Jewish community institutions, including gunfire aimed at Jewish schools in Toronto and Montreal. Thankfully, there have been no injuries. However, it is imperative that we separate clear antisemitic threats from politically motivated protests directed at the actions of a nation-state.

Accusations that the tens of thousands protesting Israel’s assault on Gaza are primarily motivated by antisemitism

77 Lerman, *Whatever Happened to Antisemitism?*.

78 The framing of apartheid has been more recently echoed by respected human rights organizations as well as multiple United Nations reports. See for example: B’Tselem, *A Regime of Jewish Supremacy from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea: This Is Apartheid* (B’Tselem, January, 2021); Human Rights Watch, *A Threshold Crossed: Israeli Authorities and the Crimes of Apartheid and Persecution* (Human Rights Watch, April 2021); Amnesty International, *Israel’s Apartheid Against Palestinians: Cruel System of Domination and Crime Against Humanity* (Amnesty International, February 2022); Michael Lynk, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Palestinian Territories Since 1967*, United Nations General Assembly, A/HRC/49/87, February 28–April 1 2022.

79 Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism, “[Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism](#)”.

80 B’nai Brith Canada, *Annual Audit of Antisemitic Incidents 2024* (June 16, 2025), 5. Along with CIJA and the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Centre, B’nai Brith is a prominent voice that advocates for the adoption of the IHRA working definition in its fight against antisemitism. Exploring the role of B’nai Brith in pro-Israel lobby efforts or the relationship (formal or informal) between the various pro-Israel lobby groups is beyond the scope of this report.

have been central to the pro-Israel institutions' attempts to rally support for Israel as it carries out what has been characterized by the International Court of Justice as a plausible genocide.⁸¹ As in the past, antisemitism statistics are touted as proof that we are facing an impending "Nazification" of Canadian society, a claim that has no credibility whatsoever. In a detailed examination of the B'nai Brith 2023 Audit, Sheryl Nestel has argued:

There are serious criticisms that can be levelled against the Audit itself and against B'nai Brith's specific claims about antisemitism in Canada. Chief among these are: inclusion of expressions of criticism of Israel as incidents of antisemitism, complete lack of methodological transparency, obfuscation of evidence of low levels of antisemitic sentiment among the Canadian public, and disregard of evidence of the attitudes about antisemitism of Canadian Jews themselves.⁸²

Furthermore, when Jewish community institutions cite pro-Palestinian speech and activism as a major source of antisemitism,⁸³ they also reinforce the view that left wing political ideology and action constitute the major threat to Jewish safety. However, studies in the U.S. and Canada demonstrate conclusively that antisemitic sentiment is far more prevalent on the political right than on the political left.⁸⁴ Therefore, an additional fatal flaw in the IHRA working definition of antisemitism is that emphasis on anti-Israelism as antisemitism threatens to divert attention away from the largest documented threat to Jewish safety: right-wing white nationalism.⁸⁵

In general, though, Jews are by all other measures incredibly safe in Canada today.

In March, 2024, Professor Robert Brym published a research report in the journal *Canadian Jewish Studies* entitled, "Jews and Israel 2024: A Survey of Canadian Attitudes and Jewish Perceptions."⁸⁶ In contrast to the alarmist conclusions of the B'nai Brith Audit, Brym reports that non-Jewish Canadians have disproportionately positive feelings towards Jews. However, Brym reports that Jewish Canadians, rather than enjoying their unprecedented racial, educational and economic privilege, ranked themselves as the group facing the *most* discrimination in Canada. The B'nai Brith Audit, and its promotion by CIJA and other pro-Israel groups, are likely shaping Jews' perceived sense of marginalization by blurring the lines between individual Jews and the state of Israel. Israel, as Israeli-British scholar Neve Gordon argues, serves as "an avatar of Jewish identity" and condemnations of Israeli violence are therefore experienced by some Jews as a personal existential threat.⁸⁷ Relying on hyperbole and opacity, the Audit plays no small part in creating Jewish fear.⁸⁸

According to Brym, "Contrary to the picture painted by many media outlets these results do not suggest that a wave of antisemitism has engulfed the general population."⁸⁹ His conclusion corresponds with the Anti-Defamation League's survey of antisemitic attitudes from 100 countries around the world. According to the ADL, 8 percent of Canadians hold antisemitic attitudes. Only

81 International Court of Justice, *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel)*, Provisional Measures, Order of 26 January 2024, I.C.J. Reports 2024.

82 Sheryl Nestel, *The Use and Misuse of Antisemitism Statistics in Canada* (Independent Jewish Voices, 2021), 2. Recently, Jewish journalists have offered criticism similar to Nestel's on the reliability of the antisemitism statistics published by the U.S. Anti-Defamation League. See, for example: Mari Cohen, "A Closer Look at the Uptick in Antisemitism," *Jewish Currents*, May 27, 2021. See also: Mari Cohen, "The ADL's Antisemitism Findings, Explained," *Jewish Currents*, April 4, 2023.

83 Arno Rosenfeld, "ADL Counts 3,000 Antisemitic Incidents Since Oct. 7, Two-Thirds Tied to Israel," *Forward*, January 10, 2024.

84 Eitan Hersh and Laura Royden, "Antisemitic Attitudes Across the Ideological Spectrum," *Political Research Quarterly* 76, no. 2 (June 25, 2025): 697–711; Robert Brym, "Jews and Israel 2024: A Survey of Canadian Attitudes and Jewish Perceptions," *Canadian Jewish Studies* 37 Spring 2024, Special Volume, April 9, 2024).

85 Shane Burley and Ben Lorber, *Safety Through Solidarity: A Radical Guide to Fighting Antisemitism* (Penguin Random House, June, 2024).

86 Brym, "Survey".

87 Neve Gordon, "Antisemitism and Zionism: The Internal Operations of the IHRA Definition," *Middle East Critique* 33, no. 3 (2024).

88 As Gordon argues, the pro-Zionist imperative, which is pervasive in Canadian Jewish life, creates "a particular emotional orientation towards an alignment with Israel, which involves apprehending those who criticize Israel and Zionism as fearsome because they ostensibly deny the right not only of Israel to exist, but also ... the right of the Jewish collective and each individual Jew to exist" ("Antisemitism and Zionism," 349).

89 Brym, "Survey," 34. Brym points out a broad discrepancy between his findings of low levels of antisemitism among Canadians and the B'nai Brith's reporting of record numbers of antisemitic incidents. To some extent, this discrepancy has to do with the increased availability of digital reporting mechanisms such as B'nai Brith's online "anti-hate mobile app." However, Brym conjectures that rather than representing a general rise in antisemitism in Canada, an increase in the number of reported antisemitic incidents may indicate that "a relatively small percentage of Canadians (counted by attitudinal surveys) may be responsible for a large percentage of incidents classified as antisemitic": Brym, "Survey," 29.

Sweden, at 4 percent, and the Netherlands, at 5 percent, are considered less antisemitic.⁹⁰ In a consequential finding about the correlation between antisemitic attitudes and negative opinions towards Israel, Brym concluded that for left-leaning groups there is a “weak to negligible” correlation between attitudes towards Jews and people’s attitudes towards Israel.⁹¹ This finding is a rebuke to CIJA’s claims that Canadian pro-Palestine protest is fundamentally antisemitic in nature.

Thus the existential fear expressed by some Canadian Jews, largely triggered by hyperbolic rhetoric and flawed statistics, is worrisome. It is also built on anti-Palestinian racism, as we will show.

It represents a disturbing form of willful ignorance. It also undermines the possibility of reciprocal solidarity in the struggle against antisemitism and all forms of racism. Demonizing and punishing those who champion Palestinian human rights and freedoms, many of whom are racialized and many of whom are Jewish, drives a wedge within antiracist movements. Principled opposition to antisemitism means opposing all forms of racism.

DEFLECTING THE DEBATE: CIJA’S OBFUSCATION OF ALLEGATIONS OF RACISM, APARTHEID, AND GENOCIDE IN GAZA

As a final segue leading to our data analysis and summary of our findings, in this section we briefly review the ways that CIJA evades credible debate about allegations of violence perpetrated by the state of Israel, including institutionalised racism, apartheid, and genocide.

CIJA’s website features several documents that explicitly demonstrate the organization’s distortion or obfuscation

of expert opinion and incontrovertible evidence that Israel practices legally-mandated racist discrimination against its Palestinian citizens, Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank, and that it is committing a genocide against Palestinians in Gaza. Eschewing the need to document their claims with empirical evidence, “Myths and Facts: The truth about the people and Land of Israel,” a document published on CIJA’s website, addresses 10 “myths” that CIJA claims have been propagated in relation to Israel.⁹²

According to CIJA, “The objective of Myths and Facts is to equip people with the information needed to participate in informed discussions leading to reasonable judgments.” The problem is that much of what CIJA labels “myths” are well-documented investigations by international human rights organizations and respected scholars, and CIJA’s response to them is mendacious. For instance, to take just one of these “myths,” CIJA explains the accusation that Israel is an *apartheid state* by claiming that Israel is a democratic country where Palestinians share equal rights to Jewish Israelis. What is completely elided in this explanation is the copious evidence of racist policies and laws enacted by Israel both inside the pre-1967 borders and in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem. Apartheid is a crime against humanity that is “committed in the context of an institutionalized regime of systematic oppression and domination by one racial group [over another].”⁹³ Adalah, The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, has documented 65 laws that discriminate against Palestinians citizens of Israel.⁹⁴

Among these laws are the following:

→ **The Law of Return (1950) grants every Jewish person in the world the right to obtain citizenship in Israel; by contrast, Israel denies the Right of Return to Palestinian refugees.**

90 Anti-Defamation League, *The ADL Global 100: Index of Antisemitism*. By citing the ADL here, we do not endorse it as a credible source for statistics on antisemitism. The ADL has been widely critiqued for many of the same reasons that we critique CIJA. We cite the ADL here to indicate that even a group that has been as widely discredited for its false and/or exaggerated claims about antisemitism, notes an extraordinarily low rate of antisemitism in Canada (Wikipedia has deemed the ADL unreliable, see: Ben Brasch, “[Wikipedia defends editors deeming Anti-Defamation League ‘unreliable’ on Gaza](#),” *The Washington Post*, June 26, 2024. For further sources critiquing the ADL’s strategy and tactics, see for example: Drop the ADL (Working Group), “[The ADL is not an ally: A Primer](#)”; Emmaia Gelman, “[The World Upside-Down: Zionist Institutions, Civil Rights Talk, and the New Cold War on Ethnic Studies](#),” *Critical Ethnic Studies Journal* 8, no. 1, (Fall 2023).

91 Brym, “Survey,” 60.

92 CIJA, “[Myths and Facts](#).”

93 International Criminal Court, *Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court*, consolidated English version, May 2024 (Permanent Bureau of the Assembly of States Parties).

94 Adalah -The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, “[The Discriminatory Laws Database](#).” See also B’tselem, “[A regime of Jewish supremacy from the Jordan river to the Mediterranean sea: This Apartheid](#),” January 12, 2021.

- The Absentees' Property Law (1950) defines all Palestinians who were expelled or who fled in 1947 as absentees and their property as "absentee property." The law was used to confiscate millions of dunams of land later used solely for Jewish settlement.
- The Citizenship and Entry Law (2003) and its subsequent amendments ban family unification in Israel between Palestinian citizens of Israel and their spouses from the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), as well as from Iran, Syria, Lebanon, or Iraq.
- The Benefits for Discharged Soldiers Law (2008) allows all institutions of higher education to consider military service – from which Palestinian citizens of Israel are exempt for historical and political reasons – when determining applicants' eligibility for financial assistance.
- The Economic Efficiency Law (2009) gives the government sweeping discretion to designate "National Priority Areas" and to allocate vast resources for their development, which it does in a way that systematically excludes Arab communities in Israel.
- The Admissions Committees Law (2011) allows hundreds of small towns built on state land to select applicants based on their "social suitability." The law is used in practice to filter out Palestinian citizens of Israel and members of other marginalized groups and is a key component of Israel's system of segregation in housing and land-use.
- The Nakba Law (2011) strips state funding from any public entity, including educational institutions, which commemorates the Nakba or Israel's Independence Day as a day of mourning.
- The Expulsion Law (2016) allows for the expulsion of Arab Knesset Members by their peers on ideological grounds, based on claims of the majority that they incite racism or support terror.
- The Kaminitz Law (2017) increases the enforcement and penalization of planning and building offenses. The law has a disparate impact on Palestinian citizens of Israel, many of whom are forced to build illegally due to decades of discrimination by the planning and building system.
- The Jewish Nation-State Law (2018) guarantees the ethnic-religious character of Israel as exclusively Jewish, denies the right to self-determination of Palestinian citizens of Israel, and entrenches the privileges enjoyed by Jewish citizens, while simultaneously anchoring

systemic inequality, discrimination, and racism against Palestinian citizens of Israel.

- Israel's two-tier criminal injustice system is one of the most blatant examples of its version of apartheid. Only Jewish Israelis, including settlers, are subject to ordinary civilian or even criminal law; all Palestinians are subject instead to a separate system of military law, in which non-Palestinian soldiers and military tribunals become judge and jury. The documented conviction rate for Palestinians post-arrest is 99 percent. Moreover, under Israel's military law, any Palestinian, including children, can be seized for pre-trial "administrative detention" and held for up to seventy-five days without being charged. During this time, detainees are vulnerable to physical and verbal abuse, which often includes torture, beatings, solitary confinement, forced confessions, and being denied visitors for weeks or months on end.⁹⁵

Racist laws and policies also abound in the Palestinian territories illegally occupied by Israel since 1967.

According to Jewish American scholar Roz Petchesky (2021), these include:

- Expanding illegal settlements throughout Area C and East Jerusalem and expelling Palestinians from their homes and fields.
- Building bypass roads that give settlers vertical and horizontal mobility across the terrain and direct connection to Israel, while further fragmenting the territory and restricting Palestinian movement and access.
- Consistently denying Palestinians building or renovation permits, forcing them to build "illegally" and thus subjecting their homes and infrastructure to demolition, sometimes requiring that they carry out such demolition themselves.
- Annexing de facto parts of the fertile Jordan Valley and Dead Sea area, and continuing to target Bedouin communities for bulldozing and forceful transfer from the West Bank, even though the Bedouins resist and rebuild, time and time again.

95 Rosalind Petchesky, "Zionism's Twilight: Colonial Dreams, Racist Nightmares, Liberated Futures," in *A Land With a People: Palestinians and Jews Confront Zionism*, ed. Esther Farmer, Rosalind Petchesky, and Sarah Sills (NYU Press, October, 2021), 17–48.

→ The apartheid wall, deemed illegal by the International Court of Justice, zigzags along and into much of the West Bank and is itself an instrument of land annexation. In some places, the wall cuts as much as eleven miles into the West Bank, effectively annexing a broad swath of Palestinian territory and cutting off some twenty-five thousand Palestinians from their fields, villages, and houses.

Despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, CIJA insists that the claim that Israel is an apartheid state constitutes a “myth.”⁹⁶

Yet, instead of engaging in the debate and explaining why they hold that unequal laws, unequal citizenship status, forced segregation, and systematic Israeli militarized violence do not amount to apartheid, CIJA deflects the debate entirely by claiming that Israel is an open democracy to all citizens. According to CIJA, “Israel is a democratic state, where all minorities receive equal protection under the law. Alongside Jewish Israelis, Arab Israelis vote, study, work, live and serve in Parliament, the courts, the military and government.”⁹⁷ This wording obscures the real situation. For instance, the Knesset recently advanced a bill that would make it easier to ban Arab political parties from participating in elections and which removes the power of the Israeli Supreme Court to decide which parties might be banned.⁹⁸

Jewish supremacy in Israel was also recently affirmed in law through amendment to Israel’s Basic law, which added that Israel is a “nation state of the Jewish people” meaning, it is not a state of all of its citizens,⁹⁹ thus further solidifying Israeli apartheid through law.

CIJA’s intentional obfuscation of these grave accusations against Israel shapes the attitudes of many Canadian Jews and others who uncritically support Israel’s campaign of annihilation against Gaza. This strategy is central to Israel’s public diplomacy gambit, also known as “hasbara.”

Genocide scholar Dirk Moses situates this strategy as one used by liberal Western societies to justify their own warfare “by claiming a universalizing and humanitarian moral virtue against genocidal perpetrators, otherwise ‘enemies of humanity.’”¹⁰⁰ Palestinians, however, are not perpetrators of genocide. When CIJA dismisses allegations of Israel’s human rights violations as stemming from antisemitism, and counters true allegations with misinformation and distorted facts, it knowingly excuses and gives public cover to crimes against humanity, up to and including apartheid and genocide.

100 A. Dirk Moses, *The Problems of Genocide: Permanent Security and the Language of Transgression* (Cambridge University Press, January, 2021), 40.

96 CIJA, “Myth: Israel is an ‘apartheid state.’”

97 CIJA, “Myth: Israel Is Committing Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing against the Palestinians,”

98 Eliav Breuer, “Coalition Advances Bill Expanding Grounds to Disqualify Election Candidates,” *The Jerusalem Post*, October 30, 2024. The implementation of such a law would likely guarantee that Israel could function even more forcefully as an ethnonational state based on Jewish supremacy.

99 Knesset, *Basic Law: Israel as the Nation-State of the Jewish People*, unofficial English translation including amendments adopted through May 1, 2022.

CIJA's legal activism exceptionalizes antisemitism; it seeks to make false notions of what antisemitism is, and to exceptionalize these false flags in legal terms. The activation of legal apparatus in support of genocide not only creates barriers to vocalizing dissent, **it also ignores the ways in which criminalization and securitization are weaponized against Indigenous, Black, and racialized people**, undermining recent resurgent protest against anti-Black racism and anti-Indigenous racism in policing.

Data Coding and Analysis

METHODOLOGY

This study examined public statements made by CIJA between October 7, 2023, and March 29, 2024. The materials we examined include 1,625 posts made on the CIJA X (formerly Twitter) account, 40 official press releases published on the CIJA website, and 144 instances where CIJA staff or executives were quoted in the media.¹⁰¹

To analyse the data collected and classified, we relied on a mixed methodology, including critical race discourse analysis, which is an approach in which written or spoken texts are examined in order to identify whether and how they reproduce racist assumptions and themes.¹⁰² Critical race theories provide a framework for understanding the relationship between race and power, and the ways it is “shaped by our social, political and cultural contexts processes and systems.”¹⁰³ It is a methodology that draws on broader historical and cultural resources to examine how the construction of identities, like Palestinian, can be influenced by the circulation of stereotypes and tropes by a range of actors in popular culture.

In particular, a framework for understanding Anti-Palestinian racism is explained in a landmark report by the Arab Canadian Lawyers Association as

...a form of anti-Arab racism that silences, excludes, erases, stereotypes, defames or dehumanizes Palestinians or their narratives. Anti-Palestinian racism takes various forms including: denying the Nakba and justifying violence against Palestinians; failing to acknowledge Palestinians as an Indigenous people with a collective identity, belonging and rights in relation

101 The same media story and quote was often posted in multiple media outlets and were counted as such.

102 Ruth Wodak, “Critical Discourse Studies,” in *The Bloomsbury Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, ed. Ken Hyland, Brian Paltridge, and Lillian L. Wong (Bloomsbury Academic, July, 2021), 35–50.

103 Daniella Hodge, “The Urgency of Critical Race Theory in Critical Discourse Studies: A Case for Critical Race Discourse Analysis,” *Journal of Multicultural Discourses* 19:1-2 (Fall 2024), 106-120.

to occupied and historic Palestine; erasing the human rights and equal dignity and worth of Palestinians; excluding or pressuring others to exclude Palestinian perspectives, Palestinians and their allies; defaming Palestinians and their allies with slander such as being inherently antisemitic, a terrorist threat/sympathizer or opposed to democratic values.¹⁰⁴

For the purposes of assessing the data we collected, we developed a guide that classified rhetorical strategies of anti-Palestinian racism thematically by drawing on the frameworks developed by the Arab Canadian Lawyers Association and expanded on by Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East.¹⁰⁵ Both ACLA and CJPME classified types of anti-Palestinian racism according to their function (silencing, excluding, erasing, stereotyping, defaming, and dehumanizing Palestinians or their narratives) and form (Nakba denial, justification of violence, failing to recognize Palestinians as an Indigenous people, erasing the human dignity of Palestinians, excluding Palestinians and allies, and defaming Palestinians and allies).

Our study undertook a related, but modified approach. Drawing on the forms of anti-Palestinian racism identified by ACLA and CJPME, we categorized anti-Palestinian racism according to the rhetorical strategies that structure narratives about Palestinians and their supporters. Specifically, we identified seven rhetorical strategies that we have distilled into four separate but interrelated themes elaborated on in the Summary of Findings below and fully described in the Coding Guide reproduced in Appendix 1.¹⁰⁶ Each communications item (post, media quote, or press release) was examined and classified using the coding guide.¹⁰⁷

104 Majid, *Anti-Palestinian Racism*, 2.

105 Majid, *Anti-Palestinian Racism*; CJPME and Foundation, *Anti-Palestinian Racism in Canada*.

106 The Coding Guide is reproduced in Appendix 1. The left column names specific types of APR rhetorical strategies, and the right column provides examples of the types of statements that are classified under each. For instance, a statement that characterizes Palestinians as motivated by Jew-hatred or denigrates Jews who support Palestinian rights would be coded as “conflating antisemitism with criticism of Israel/anti-Zionism” (Type 1).

107 See Appendix A. We adopted a conservative approach to classifying the dataset by excluding materials we considered ambiguous. Then each item was cross-checked by several researchers to ensure the data set was a fair representation that did not overreach. An initial round of coding was followed by a second round of

There was some overlap in the materials analyzed. For instance, CIJA often posts its press release materials on X as well as on its website. Each of these were considered as separate instances of anti-Palestinian racism, given that different audiences may be reached through each modality, and that audiences are impacted by the sheer number of times they hear a message. The X posts are sometimes linked to other materials such as re-posts (retweets), opinion pieces written by CIJA representatives, and links to articles that featured CIJA's views.

A qualitative approach allowed us to remain attentive to the story that CIJA constructs, the context within which these instances occur, and the broader narratives CIJA tells about Palestinians and their supporters on behalf of Jewish Canadians.

DATA ANALYSIS: CIJA'S FALSE ASSERTIONS AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NARRATIVE IN SUPPORT OF ISRAEL'S GENOCIDE

Only one racist statement from an organization that claims to represent Jewish Canadians would be one too many. Our analysis shows that the racist anti-Palestinian rhetoric in CIJA communications constructs four overarching narratives that promote hatred toward, and fear of, Palestinians and Palestine supporters. These narratives operate in ways that justify Israeli genocide in Palestine and silence Palestinians and their supporters in Canada. The four narratives are:

- 01. Unrestricted violence against Palestinians is necessary for Jewish safety**
- 02. The pro-Palestine movement, which supports terrorism, is responsible for a dramatic spike in antisemitism**
- 03. The vast majority of Canadian Jews support Israel and Zionism and are opposed to the pro-Palestine movement**
- 04. Protecting Jews and combating antisemitism requires the restriction of civil liberties of pro-Palestinian protesters**

Each of these narratives is expanded on in the following pages with emblematic examples.

We demonstrate how these narratives act to create consensus on Israel's need to continue what Israel calls its "military operations" in Gaza, despite the "humanitarian crisis" it has euphemistically produced, and continues to produce at the time of writing.

We must qualify here that although CIJA occasionally expresses sympathy for Palestinian civilians in Gaza, their rhetoric is not peace-seeking. They lobby against the International Court of Justice and ceasefire resolutions, they conflate Palestinian demonstrators with Hamas and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), they construct terrorism as exclusively non-state violence, and erase or attack Jewish people who refuse to adhere to their claims. They use the descriptors Hamas, terrorist, or barbaric to justify violence against Palestinians and repression against their allies. CIJA's strategic messaging sanitizes the long history of Israel's colonialism, subjugation, and oppression of Palestinians. CIJA's comments therefore stand as de-contextualized and de-historicized narratives that operate to justify violence committed against all Palestinians in the name of fighting Hamas.

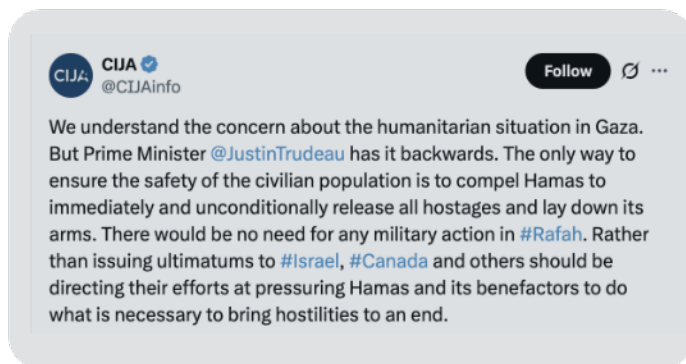
cross-checking to ensure the rigor of the classification process.

01.

CIJA's false assertion: Unrestricted violence against Palestinians is necessary for Jewish safety

Analysis of our data reveals that CIJA promotes the idea that unrestricted violence against Palestinians is necessary for Jewish safety. CIJA maintains that the only way to protect Palestinians in Gaza from Israeli military aggression is for Hamas to surrender. But the deadly bombardment of Gaza indiscriminately kills civilians, at numbers far beyond Hamas targets. By February 14, 2024 — when CIJA posted the tweet above to X — at least 30,000 Palestinians had been killed and 70,000 injured. Hundreds of thousands of homes were already damaged or destroyed and over a million people were internally displaced within a territory from which they had no means to escape.¹⁰⁸ By December 2023, UNICEF declared Gaza “the most dangerous place in the world for children.”¹⁰⁹ Yet, the necessity of Israeli violence against Palestinians is presented as a non-negotiable position that CIJA justifies through a number of exaggerated claims and unlawful pretenses.

First, CIJA maintains that the use of “human shields” by Hamas justifies an extraordinary scale of civilian death. While the use of civilians as ‘human shields’ is strictly forbidden under international law, according to an international human rights lawyer and former senior United Nations Official, “the mere presence of armed forces or members of the enemy in populated civilian areas does not constitute the use of human shields.”¹¹⁰ There is limited evidence of Hamas’s use of civilian infrastructure for military operations,¹¹¹ but according to experts at the Middle East Institute, the allegations of Hamas’ use of human shields does not hold up to scrutiny



POSTED FEB. 14 2024

and more importantly, could not possibly account for the magnitude of death and destruction in Gaza.¹¹²

As Elgindy and Lurie-Pardes write, “the massive civilian casualties and destruction inflicted on Gaza are best understood not as a result of human shields but of Israeli policy and military conduct, which has both blurred the distinction between civilian and military targets and inflicted deliberately disproportionate levels of destruction.”¹¹³

Yet the discourse of “human shields” has been used repeatedly by CIJA to reject a ceasefire in Gaza.

“Human shields” are CIJA’s rationalization for destroying civilian infrastructure and targeting hospitals and schools in the Gaza Strip, which not only increases the death toll of citizens in the immediate term, but also triggers a slower form of violence through lack of access to medical care that is a component of genocidal intent.¹¹⁴ The targeting of hospitals is also prohibited by international law. In fact, Human Rights Watch issued an urgent

108 United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *Gaza Strip: Reported Palestinian Casualties*, infographic, February 19, 2024.

109 UNICEF, *Geneva Palais Briefing Note – Gaza: The World’s Most Dangerous Place to Be a Child*, December 5, 2023.

110 Jonathan Ofir, “Every Accusation a Confession: Israel and the Double Lie of ‘Human Shields,’” *Mondoweiss*, September, 2024.

111 United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), “UNRWA Condemns Placement of Rockets, for a Second Time, in One of Its Schools,” July 22, 2014.

112 Khaled Elgindy and Eyal Lurie-Pardes, “Human Shields or Shielding Israel from Accountability?” *Middle East Institute*, May 10, 2024. On the documented use of human shields by the IDF, see also: Ben Reiff, “Israeli Soldiers Used 80-Year-Old Gazan as Human Shield, Then Killed Him,” *+972 Magazine*, February 16, 2025; Sam Mednick and Samy Magdy, “Israeli Use of Human Shields in Gaza Was Systematic, Soldiers and Former Detainees Tell the AP,” *AP News*, May 24, 2025; Debora Patta, “Israeli Soldier Tells CBS News He Was Ordered to Use Palestinians as Human Shields in Gaza - CBS News,” *CBS News*, March 26, 2025; Anonymous, “In Gaza, Almost Every IDF Platoon Keeps a Human Shield, a Sub-Army of Palestinian Slaves,” *Haaretz*, March 30, 2025.

113 Khaled Elgindy and Eyal Lurie-Pardes, “Human Shields or Shielding Israel from Accountability?” *Middle East Institute*, May 10, 2024.

114 Rasha Khatib et al., “Counting the Dead in Gaza: Difficult but Essential,” *The Lancet* 404, no. 10449 (2024): 237–38.



Hamas terrorists have continually used hospitals to store weapons and shelter terrorists since October 7th - which is a grave violation of international humanitarian law (IHL) and which leads to hospitals becoming legitimate targets under IHL.

In #Gaza, as well as in the West Bank, places meant for healing are instead cynically used for terrorist aims - Hamas must be held to account for their crimes.

POSTED ON JAN. 31 2024

warning, calling for Israel's targeting of medical facilities, personnel, and transport to be investigated as war crimes, expressing concerns of fatal implications to patients and caregivers.¹¹⁵ In particular, the state of Israel's attacks violate Article 2(b)(ix) of the International Criminal Court's Rome Statute that prohibits "intentionally directing attacks against buildings dedicated to religion, education, art, science or charitable purposes, historic monuments and places where the sick and wounded are collected, provided they are not military objectives."¹¹⁶ The permissibility of targeting the various sites listed if they are "military objectives" does not provide carte blanche for attack; the principle of proportionality, a foundation of international law, dictates that any attack must be proportionate.¹¹⁷

Numerous health and other experts have commented on the disproportionality of Israel's attacks on hospitals and medical infrastructure. Physicians for Human Rights Israel concluded that "each of the multiple attacks on Gaza's hospitals was disproportionate."¹¹⁸ The World Health Organization (WHO) reported that by November 10, 2023, "18 out of 36 hospitals and 46 out of 72 primary

care clinics were forced to shut down" due to attacks and lack of electricity and fuel.¹¹⁹ Despite these harrowing statistics, CIJA tweeted at Foreign Affairs Minister Melanie Joly on February 12, 2024: "there wouldn't be another single civilian death in Gaza if Hamas surrendered, if they stopped using hospitals and UN buildings as terrorist bases, if they stopped hiding behind the civilians they should be building a future for." These contentions that the use of "human shields" justify such destruction are unlawful and implicitly endorse significant civilian casualty and indirect death, through lack of access to medical care through destroyed facilities.¹²⁰

Lastly on this point, the condemnation of Hamas' use of "civilian shields" constitutes a double standard for warfare by CIJA. The IDF's own headquarters are in the hearts of Tel Aviv and Be'er Sheva and the widespread use of Palestinians as human shields by the IDF is well-documented.¹²¹

Second, CIJA repeated the necessity of Israeli bombardments through their rejection of Canada's support for a ceasefire in Gaza. On December 12, 2023, CIJA's CEO and President, Shimon Koffler Fogel, responded to the Government of Canada's vote in support of a UN General Assembly ceasefire resolution: "We're disgusted and frankly shocked that only hours after issuing a statement that a ceasefire would only be possible under the condition that Hamas release the hostages, stop its use of Palestinians as human shields, lay down its arms, and surrender its control of Gaza, Canada voted in support of a UN General Assembly resolution supporting a ceasefire."¹²² In a Press Release, CIJA wrote: "Canada's decision to support the resolution will undoubtedly lead to further hate being directed towards Jews here in

115 Human Rights Watch, "Gaza: Unlawful Israeli Hospital Strikes Worsen Health Crisis," *Human Rights Watch*, November 14, 2023.

116 International Criminal Court, *Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court*, consolidated English version, May 2024 (Permanent Bureau of the Assembly of States Parties).

117 A United Nations Report has found that Israeli attacks on Gaza violate various principles of international law including the principle of proportionality: United Nations Human Rights, Office of the High Commissioner, "Update Report: six month update report on the human rights situation in Gaza," November 1, 2023 to April 30, 2024," UNHCR Office of the High Commissioner, November 8, 2024, 5.

118 Itamar Mann, Aseel Aburass, Tirza Liebowitz, and Guy Shalev, "Destruction of Conditions of Life: A Health Analysis of the Gaza Genocide" *Physicians for Human Rights Israel*, July 23, 2005.

119 Human Rights Watch, "Gaza: Israeli Ambulance Strike Apparently Unlawful," *Human Rights Watch*, November 7, 2023.

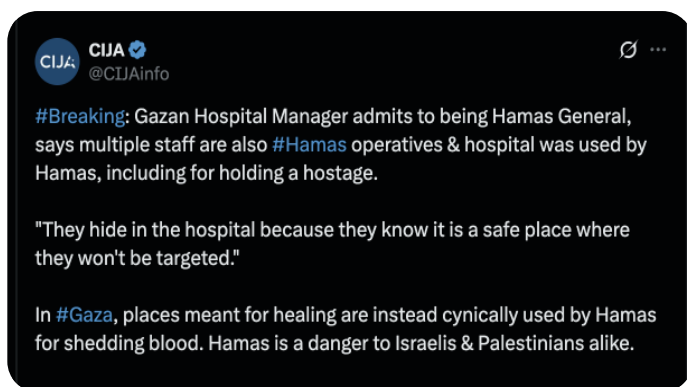
120 Khatib et al., "Counting the Dead in Gaza."

121 Evan Dyer, "Israel-Hamas Gaza Conflict: Claims of Israeli Use of Palestinians as Human Shields," *CBC News*, February 4, 2024. The paradox could also be the strong evidence of Israeli use of Palestinians as human shields, both historically: B'Tselem, "Human Shields," and in the current genocide: Natan Odenheimer, Bilal Shbair, and Patrick Kingsley, "How Israel's Army Uses Palestinians as Human Shields in Gaza," *The New York Times*, October 14, 2024; Debora Patta, "Israeli Soldier Tells CBS News He Was Ordered to Use Palestinians as Human Shields in Gaza," *CBS News*, March 26, 2025.

122 CIJA, "CIJA Disgusted and Shocked by Hypocritical Canadian Foreign Policy," Press Release, December 12, 2023, *emphasis added*.

Canada.”¹²³ This statement implicates all Jews in Canada in Israel’s crimes while falsely asserting that support for a ceasefire will make Jews in Canada less safe.

What CIJA leaves out is that Canada, Australia, and New Zealand also issued a statement calling for Israeli adherence to international law and expressing concern for civilians. Canada’s joint statement warns: “We are alarmed at the diminishing safe space for civilians in Gaza. The price of defeating Hamas cannot be *the continuous suffering of all Palestinian civilians*.”¹²⁴ Nonetheless, CIJA distorts this statement to issue conditions for a ceasefire that depends solely on Palestinian actors. CIJA claims that to do otherwise would harm Jewish people in Canada, which implicates all Canadian Jews in this demand.



POSTED DEC `19 2023

According to CIJA, Jewish safety relies entirely on annihilating Hamas and therefore justifies any level of violence enacted against Palestinians. The massive death toll for Palestinians falls entirely on Hamas’ shoulders because Hamas “advocate[s] for the annihilation of all Jews.”¹²⁵ This distills all Palestinians to Hamas and erases the possibility that Palestinians have legitimate political grievances, instead suggesting that Palestinians are motivated by antisemitism. CIJA’s framing of Hamas as

bearing sole responsibility for violence committed against Palestinians in Gaza suggests that Hamas, not the state of Israel, is responsible for unrestricted violence, thereby absolving Israel from responsibility for genocide.

Yet, the International Court of Justice application by South Africa enumerates *dozens of genocidal statements* made by Israeli officials since October 7 — and since enacted against Palestinians — including the following from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu:

On 28 October 2023, as Israeli forces prepared their land invasion of Gaza, the Prime Minister invoked the Biblical story of the total destruction of Amalek by the Israelites, stating: “you must remember what Amalek has done to you, says our Holy Bible. And we do remember.” The Prime Minister referred again to Amalek in the letter sent on 3 November 2023 to Israeli soldiers and officers. The relevant biblical passage reads as follows: “Now go, attack Amalek, and proscribe all that belongs to him. Spare no one, but kill alike men and women, infants and sucklings, oxen and sheep, camels and asses.”¹²⁶

The evocation of Amalek is a warning that the “enemy” of Jewish people must be destroyed in their entirety. As Atalia Omer explains, in biblical terms, Amalek is the archetypal enemy of the Israelites and the evocation operates as a genocidal commandment. The command to kill alike “men and women, infants and sucklings” necessarily means there are no civilians and no non-combatants; it is a call to kill all Palestinians as the “enemy.”

Third, the state of Israel’s physical, financial, and political attacks on the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) have been central to CIJA’s narrative of the need for unrestricted retaliation against Hamas to keep Jews safe. As a humanitarian organization UNRWA is obligated to remain neutral by its UN Mandate.¹²⁷ In January 2024,

123 Dylan Robertson, “Canada Breaks with Long-Standing Israel Stance at UN in Voting for Gaza Ceasefire,” *The Canadian Press*, December 12, 2023.

124 Prime Minister of Canada, *Joint Statement by the Prime Ministers of Australia, Canada and New Zealand*, December 12, 2023, archived.

125 CIJA (@CIJAinfo), “Minister @melaniejoly - Israeli rescue teams wouldn’t have to go into Rafah at all if Hamas would release all their hostages ...,” *X (formerly Twitter)*, February 12, 2024. <https://twitter.com/CIJAinfo/status/>.

126 International Court of Justice, *Application of the Genocide Convention (South Africa v. Israel)*, Urgent Request and Application for the Indication of Additional Provisional Measures and the Modification of the Court’s Prior Provisional Measures Decisions Pursuant to Article 41 of the Statute of the International Court of Justice and Articles 75 and 76 of the Rules of Court of the International Court of Justice, I.C.J. Pleadings, at 142.

127 UNRWA provides Israel with a list of all its employees in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and its Commissioner-General



Minister @melaniejoly - #Israeli rescue teams wouldn't have to go into Rafah at all if Hamas would release all their hostages. There wouldn't be another single civilian death in Gaza if Hamas surrendered, if they stopped using hospitals and UN buildings as terrorist bases, if they stopped hiding behind the civilians they should be building a future for. There was a ceasefire on #October7 until Hamas invaded and murdered and raped innocent Israelis. Lasting peace cannot be achieved while Hamas remains in place and they continue to advocate for the annihilation of all Jews. Ignoring these facts denies the reality of what is happening. #cdnpoli

POSTED FEB. 12, 2024



190 UNRWA Gaza staff are "hardened fighters, killers".

10% of 12,000+ staff are Hamas or Islamic Jihad members, inc. 1-in-4 male staff. 50% of staff are closely related to terrorists.

17 gov'ts stopped paying the bill. We hope they'll continue to #DefundUNRWA.

POSTED JAN.30, 2024

the news broke that Israel was investigating the role of a dozen UNRWA workers in the attacks of October 7. Israel announced in addition that 10 percent of UNRWA's 13,000 employees working in Gaza were members of Hamas. CIJA began petitioning immediately for Canada to cut funding to UNRWA.¹²⁸

UNRWA is the main body that distributes food to people throughout Gaza. As a result of the allegations against UNRWA, Canada briefly suspended funding to the agency alongside dozens of other countries. The funding was resumed after the government of Canada reviewed an interim report on the allegations and concluded that UNRWA had taken immediate measures to strengthen its "oversight, accountability and transparency."¹²⁹ But as Ayat Hamdan writes, "Even if the accusations were proven true, it does not justify sweeping sanctions against an agency with 30,000 employees, including 12,000 in the Gaza Strip, which serves 6 million refugees. This is a form of collective punishment implemented by Israel and supported by its Western allies."¹³⁰ Starvation is an incremental tool of genocide and attacks against

humanitarian organizations must be issued with caution and in deference to international law.¹³¹

By March 2024, Israel's campaign to shut down UNRWA had culminated in Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's direction to the IDF to replace UNRWA with other international aid organizations.¹³² For months, under intense bombardment by Israel, the IDF killed 168 UNRWA staff, damaged 157 UNRWA facilities (many of which were schools), and destroyed the UNRWA headquarters in Gaza City.¹³³ Analysts believe Israel's attacks on UNRWA are also fueled by the organization's role in providing education in Gaza, where the agency runs almost 200 schools and employs almost 10,000 educators to educate nearly 300,000 students. But more importantly, the question of Palestinian refugees itself and its related political question of the right of return is tied to UNRWA, which has been responsible for the maintenance of refugee camps since 1948.

UNRWA was left struggling to function "hand-to-mouth" when funding from 16 countries was cut due to Israel's allegations of terrorism.¹³⁴ On August 4, 2024, the United Nations released the results of its investigation into Israel's allegations and 9 employees were identified as participating in the October 7 attack on Israel and

Philippe Lazzarini meets nearly every month in Israel with Amir Weissbrod, the deputy director-general of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs responsible for relations with UN agencies: Patrick Kingsley and Ronen Bergman, "The 8 Days That Roiled the U.N.'s Top Agency in Gaza," *The New York Times*, March 2, 2024.

128 Brian Passifiume, "Critics Ask Why UNRWA Freeze Took So Long," *National Post*, January 30, 2024.

129 Global Affairs Canada, "Canada announces continued assistance for people in Gaza", March 8, 2024.

130 Ayat Hamdan, "The Israeli War Against UNRWA and Its Impact on Palestinian Refugees" *Al-Muntaga: New Perspectives on Arab Studies*, no. 7, no. 1 (January/February 2024): 93.

131 Michael Spagat et al. "Violent and Nonviolent Death Tolls for the Gaza War: New Primary Evidence".

132 Tovah Lazaroff, "Israel Begun Process of Replacing UNRWA, Netanyahu Says," *The Jerusalem Post*, February 8, 2024.

133 United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), "#UNRWAWorks. Frontline Heroes: The Race Against the Clock to Avert Famine," *UNRWA Newsroom*, March 18, 2024.

134 Michelle Nichols, "UNRWA Head Warns of Concerted Campaign to End Its Operations," *Reuters*, March 4, 2024.

fired.¹³⁵ The report disproved the 10 percent figure that Israel had provided and revealed that Israel had obtained the 9 employee confessions under use of torture.¹³⁶ Yet, even after this investigation concluded, CIJA continued to press the Canadian government not to restore funding to UNRWA and filed an application for judicial review when Canada did so.¹³⁷

In short, CIJA has publicly advocated for the defunding of UNRWA which has dire consequences for the distribution of aid to Palestinians in a time of manufactured starvation as a tool of genocide, it has disseminated information in support of this advocacy that was unreliable as a result of being obtained through torture, and has relied on racist language in its advocacy. Reducing UNRWA to an organization that “supports terrorism” ignores the historic and ongoing role that UNRWA plays in sustaining

Palestinian life and contributes to the dehumanization of Palestinian people.¹³⁸



Fourth and finally, the narrative of unrestricted violence against Palestinians as necessary to keep Jews safe in Canada is also material to CIJA's attacks against the International Court of Justice; CIJA has denounced the South African case against Israel as a “blood libel.” The labeling of South Africa's delegation to the ICJ as “blood libel” is a specious accusation against the Black African legal scholars and practitioners who brought forward the case.

Invoking an ancient antisemitic trope to describe a proceeding of international law only serves to recirculate a terrible story that accuses Jews of murdering Christian children in order to use their blood for ritual purposes. What this “blood libel” trope has to do with a legal tendered submission to an international court of justice is anyone's guess.

South Africa's ICJ submission was a forensic documentation of atrocities committed by the Israeli army and the establishment of genocidal intent by publicly available statements by Israeli political figures. CIJA's attempt to literally mythologize the genocide by comparing it to the mythologies of medieval Europe concerning Jews is deflection and denial of the war crimes committed in Gaza.



135 United Nations, “UN completes investigation on UNRWA staff” *UN News*, August 4, 2024.

136 Reuters and Toi Staff, “UNRWA report claims some agency employees admitted Hamas ties under Israeli coercion” *The Times of Israel*, March 9, 2024.

137 CIJA, “UNRWA Funding: CIJA Demands Federal Government Accountability” *CIJA Press Release*, August 20, 2024.

138 For a very brief overview of UNRWA and its importance to Palestinians, see: *Al Jazeera (Explainer)* “What is UNRWA and why is it important to Palestinians” *Al Jazeera*, February 1, 2024.

Accusations that Jews murdered Christian children in order to use their blood for ritual purposes emerged in Europe in the mid-twelfth Century.

Despite their condemnation by Church authorities, these accusations persisted and often led to the trial and execution of Jews when Christian children went missing.¹³⁹ The Blood Libel mythology waxed and waned in Europe over the centuries, leaping across religious and geographic boundaries. The Eastern European pogroms against Jews in early 20th Century Eastern Europe were often unleashed against a background of rumours of Jewish ritual murder of Christian children. Within decades, Nazi propaganda revived and updated the gruesome depictions of alleged Jewish ritual murders as a foundational antisemitic trope during the Third Reich.¹⁴⁰ Since the October 7 Hamas attacks and Israel's genocidal assault on Gaza, Israel and its supporters have appropriated the ancient blood libel accusation and directed it at its critics. Despite copious evidence from reliable human rights organizations affirming Israel's policies of apartheid, genocide, intentional starvation, civilian massacres and the destruction of Gaza's health care infrastructure, Israel and its supporters use blood libel accusations to deny Israel's war crimes and to link Palestinians and those supporting them to centuries-old antisemitic tropes.¹⁴¹

139 Magda Teter, *Blood Libel: On the Trail of an Antisemitic Myth* (Harvard University Press, 2020).

140 Teter, *Blood Libel*, 380.

141 See for example: Canaan Lidor, "Israel calls HRW 'genocide' report a 'blood libel,'" *Cleveland Jewish News*, December 19, 2024.

CIJA continued to use accusations of antisemitism to discredit the proceedings of the ICJ. The ICJ found that Israel is committing a plausible genocide and must comply with provisional measures to protect Palestinian life. CIJA noted in a press release in response that, "the ruling *will be used* by anti-Israel activists to further malign Israel and its supporters and by antisemitic actors as 'justification' for *assaulting those advocating for the safety of the Jewish state* and its citizens."¹⁴² Here, CIJA suggests that any attempt to hold Israel accountable for alleged violations of international law when it uses violence against Palestinians, no matter the evidence, should be dismissed and silenced because such attempts are antisemitic or may embolden antisemitism. Effectively, CIJA is arguing that Israel should be above the law and that the lives of Jews in Israel or elsewhere deserve greater protection than those of Palestinians. This narrative is further analysed in the next section.

142 CIJA, "J7 International Task Force Against Antisemitism Reacts to ICJ Ruling on Provisional Measures," CIJA Press Release, January 26, 2024, *emphasis added*.

02.

CIJA's false assertion: The pro-Palestine movement, which supports terrorism, is responsible for a dramatic spike in antisemitism

CIJA promotes a false narrative linking the movement for Palestinian rights and the rise of antisemitism in Canada. While mainstream media or politicians rightly refrain from condemning all Israelis when pro-Israel advocates utter death threats, slurs, or racist remarks, the entire Palestinian solidarity movement is consistently depicted as antisemitic when the actions of individuals cross the line or when symbols of the movement are misinterpreted as antisemitic by CIJA. In general, Palestinian solidarity as a whole is often interpreted as antisemitic by CIJA.

For example, protest slogans are often misrepresented as violent and extremist. Eta Yudin, Vice President of CIJA, Quebec, co-wrote an op-ed in the Montreal Gazette

"From the river to the sea, #Palestine will be free":

● An activist with an Israeli flag tied to his shoe & a dog ripping it apart.

● A poster with arrows clearly indicating the geographic boundaries of what land will be "freed."

This is not a call for #Peace & human rights. It's a call for the destruction of the Jewish state.

POSTED DEC. 3 2023.

calling protesters' chants of "global intifada" as "endorsements and appeals for global terrorism against Jews."¹⁴³

In Arabic, the word "intifada" means "shaking off" and is commonly understood to mean resistance, or a shaking off of structures of oppression, perpetrated by the state of Israel. It is not a call for violence against Jewish people.¹⁴⁴

The Gazette op-ed also argues that, "from the river to the sea" is a demand for the destruction of the world's sole Jewish state and the removal of its millions of Jewish inhabitants." "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free" is a phrase with multiple meanings, and according to experts, its most common in North America "is based in Palestinian calls for liberation, given a long history of dispossession."¹⁴⁵ A demand that Israel, from the river to the sea, be a state for all of its citizens as opposed to an ethno-nationalist Jewish state that privileges Jewish identity is a decolonial political demand relating to governance, not a call for violence against Jews. Experts unanimously reject the idea that "the eliminationist

interpretation is central to the history of Palestinian interpretations, including in their considerations after October 7, 2023."¹⁴⁶

The conflation of Palestinian calls for liberation and calls for violence against Jews are also based on framing criticism of Israel (and enacting that criticism, for example, through a common political act of desecrating flags) as "the destruction of the Jewish state."

Israel's status as a state created for and by the Jewish people, with the support of Western imperial powers, does not exempt it from acting within the boundaries of international law. Israel was founded through a colonization process, and calls for its decolonization and for a "free Palestine," are political demands made against the illegal occupation of Palestinian territory and homelands.¹⁴⁷ Just as with the critique of any other state, these are legitimate issues to discuss regardless of whether one agrees with the critique.



[Click to see image at link]

Posted on Dec. 3, 2023, CIJA noted that a poster promoting a rally contained "arrows clearly indicating the geographic boundaries of what land will be 'freed.'"

Protest signs are another frequent source of material for CIJA to mischaracterize Palestinian calls for justice. One CIJA X post states, "Spotted at the anti-#Israel rally in downtown #Ottawa today: 'Glory to our martyrs.' What a disgusting glorification of #Hamas' murder, rape & kidnapping of Israeli men, women & children."¹⁴⁸ The inference here is that the martyrs (translated as "witnesses" in Arabic¹⁴⁹) being mourned are the Hamas militants who

143 Yair Szlak and Eta Yudin, "Antisemitism on Campus Cannot Be Tolerated; Students' Safety and Rights Are Under Threat," *Montreal Gazette*, January 24, 2024. See also CIJA CEO Shimon Koffler Fogel has stated to the Vancouver Sun that the chant is "unequivocally hateful and antisemitic," (as the Sun put it), which has "only one interpretation," according to Fogel - "what it effectively calls for is the destruction of the Jewish state." Brian Passifume, "Petition Wants Antisemitic Chants Deemed 'Hate'; 'All Levels of Government' Urged to Act," *Vancouver Sun*, May 21, 2024.

144 Mira Fox, "So what does 'intifada' actually mean?" *Forward*, December 15, 2023.

145 Esmat Elhalaby, Anver M. Emon, Alejandro Paz, Kent Roach, and Jillian Rogin, "From the River to the Sea: Palestine Will Be Free: A Primer on History, Context, and Legalities in Canada," *University of Toronto, Hearing Palestine Initiative*, December, 2023.

146 Elhalaby et. al, "From the River to the Sea." See also *University of Toronto (Governing Council) v Doe et al.*, 2024 ONSC 3755, at paras 88-106, where the court found that no evidence supporting the argument that the slogan was used with antisemitic intention.

147 Muhannad Ayyash, "Zionism, Settler-Colonialism, and Nationalism: On Motivations and Violence," *Middle East Critique* 33, no. 2 (2024).

148 Posted on Oct 15, 2023.

149 "In Arabic, *shahāda* means witnessing, with its senses ranging from "declaring something one knows to be true," "giving an eye-witness account," and "offering testimony" (as in a court) to "dying for God." The latter meaning of the term is often translated to English as "martyrdom," and indeed *shahid* (pl. *shuhadā*) can mean both "martyr" and "witness" (in all the senses familiar to us in English);

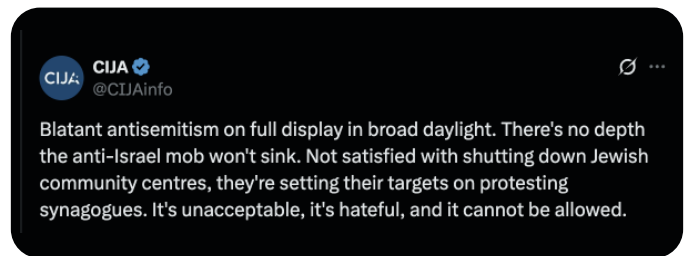
entered Israel on October 7. But as the court found in *UofT v Doe*, 2024:

Many non-Palestinians interpret the phrase as glorifying terrorists. The respondents and certain Intervenor submit that this meaning reflects a dominant narrative in Western media derived in large part because Middle Eastern terrorist groups refer to their dead members as “martyrs”. A number of Palestinian based Intervenor submit a contrasting narrative which explains that the Arabic word at issue is “shaheed” which literally means “witness,” although it is generally translated as “martyr.” In Palestinian culture it refers to a person wrongly killed because of an ongoing fight for liberation and justice, regardless of their religious background. That would include innocent civilians who have died in the Gaza war.¹⁵⁰

Despite this ambiguity, CIJA relied on accusations such as this one to argue that an “unrelenting wave of antisemitism” had been unleashed on Canada.¹⁵¹ Mistranslation itself can be a weapon of oppression.¹⁵² The most troubling part of this misdirection is that there were plenty of confirmed attacks against synagogues and schools across Canada that undoubtedly exposed antisemitism in society after October 7. In November 2023 and December 2024, a Jewish synagogue was firebombed in the Montreal suburb of Dollard-des-Ormeaux, and a Jewish school was also shot at that November in Montreal.¹⁵³ In May 2024, the Jewish school Belz Yeshiva Ketana at the Young Israel of Montreal synagogue in the city’s Cote-des-Neiges—Notre-Dame-de-Grace neighborhood was shot at overnight, and multiple shots were fired one morning at a Chabad girls’ school in Toronto.¹⁵⁴ In August 2024, newspapers reported that

multiple synagogues, Jewish community centres, and hospitals in Montreal, Toronto and Ottawa were emailed a bomb threat.¹⁵⁵ There were also problematic chants at rallies and protests, with Jewish Israelis being told to “go back to Europe.”¹⁵⁶

Yet, despite inconsistent links between these attacks and Palestine solidarity, CIJA has continued to call for the silencing of the movement. For example, in January 2024, Toronto police banned demonstrators from hanging banners from a bridge over Highway 401 because the area includes a Jewish population. The protesters’ messages were against the war on Gaza, which some people in the local Jewish community found intimidating, despite no threats of harm or violence against Jewish people, and despite the fact that many of the protestors were themselves Jewish.¹⁵⁷ The subjective belief of being intimidated may itself reflect anti-Palestinian racism: viewing Palestinians as dangerous people that Jews should be afraid of.



POSTED MAR 6, 2024. IMAGE ACCOMPANYING HERE.

Atalia Omer, “Witnessing Genocide,” *Sightings*, April 4, 2024.

150 *University of Toronto (Governing Council) v. Doe et al.*, 2024 ONSC 3755 (CanLII), at para 99.

151 CIJA, “Additional Investments Made into the Federal Security Infrastructure Program.”

152 RespondCrisisTranslation, “Mistranslation itself can be a weapon of oppression,” Blog Post.

153 The Canadian Press, “Timeline: What Has Happened in Canada Since Oct. 7, 2023,” *CTV News*, October 7, 2024; Ron Kampeas, “Montreal Synagogue Firebombed for the 2nd Time in Just Over a Year,” *The Forward*, December 18, 2024.

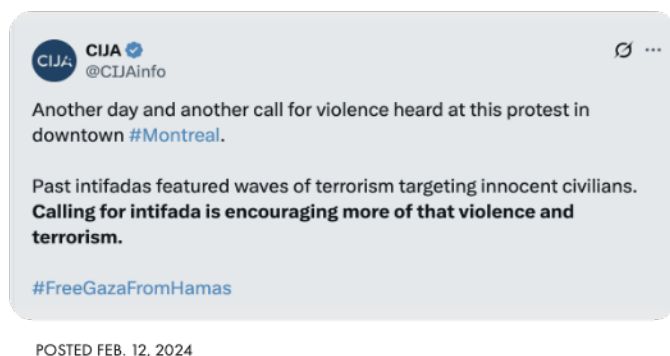
154 Jewish Telegraphic Agency, “For the Second Time in a Week, Shots Fired at a Canadian Jewish School,” *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, May 30, 2024.

155 Jackie Hajdenberg, “Mass Bomb Threat Sent to Dozens of Jewish Institutions across Canada,” *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, August 22, 2024.

156 Erika Morris and Matthew Lapierre, “McGill Asks Police for Help as Pro-Palestinian Encampment Enters Fourth Day,” *CBC News*, April 30, 2024. Over half of Israel’s population are Israelis from a non-European background. While we understand Zionism is a product of European ideology, this chant echoes both anti-immigrant racist taunts, and for Jewish survivors of the Holocaust an antisemitic statement that urges them back to the countries where they were slaughtered and from which they were violently expelled. We understand the likely intention of these calls as decolonial chants, but we caution against the problematic context in this case of calling to expel all Jewish Israelis back to countries from which they were systematically exterminated and expelled - or never lived. See: Ella Shohat, “Sephardim in Israel: Zionism from the Standpoint of its Jewish Victims,” *Duke University Press*, no.19/20 (1988), and *On the Arab-Jew, Palestine, and Other Displacements: Selected Writings*, (Pluto Press, April, 2017), 37-76.

157 CJPME, “Inaccurate description of pro-Palestine protests at Avenue road and highway 401,” *CJPME Media Accountability Project*, open letter, January 9, 2024.

In addition, CIJA claimed synagogues were “targeted” for protest due to “Jew hatred,” when a number of shuls were holding speaker events for a company selling real estate in the illegally occupied West Bank, and a United Jewish Appeal office in Montreal hosted three Israel Defense Fund (IDF) reservists. Many of these protests were led by Jewish groups.¹⁵⁸ Despite being led by Jews, even a Chanukah candle lighting was deemed by CIJA to be antisemitic: “While the Jewish people will be gathering to share messages of peace, hope, and light, this group is seeking to spread hatred against Jews and intimidate the community and our allies.”¹⁵⁹ When the BCCLA put out a statement defending the Charter rights of protesters, CIJA responded that the civil liberties association was “whitewashing” the glorification of murder of Israelis. On October 25, 2023 they wrote, “They aren’t pro-Palestinian. They’re pro-hate.”



Another strategy CIJA uses to dismiss the political movement in Canada for Palestinian rights is to frame these protests as actions “that seek to leverage a *foreign conflict*” to target the Jewish community with hate and intimidation.”¹⁶⁰ CIJA — an organization with the words “Israel” and “Jewish” in its name, but not “Canada” — calls Palestinian interests “foreign” while its own pro-Israel

lobby efforts remain categorically “Canadian.” The idea that this conflict is “foreign” also contradicts Canada’s economic and political support for Israel, while Palestinian Canadians have watched their families and homeland come under intense attack for nearly two years.

Perhaps the most common narrative about Palestine solidarity marches, activism, and expression throughout Canada since October 7, 2023 has been the conflation of demonstrations with terrorism and affiliation or sympathy for Hamas. Hamas is an acronym for the Islamic Resistance Movement, and it forms both the civil government in Gaza and the military arm that established the Al Aqsa Brigade that attacked Israel on October 7.

To be clear, public protests and demonstrations are *general assemblies* of people responding to a call to action. They will reflect a wide range and deep diversity of participants, and there have clearly been protests where both Hamas and the secular Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine flags are visible.

The question here is not whether some of the protestors support Hamas, but how CIJA uses Hamas as a descriptor and as a shorthand for terrorism that automatically demonizes not only those carrying these flags, but all others present, and the entire movement in defence of Palestinian life. In CIJA’s discourse, the association with Hamas justifies extreme violence against Palestinians and the repression of protest.

Yet, by October 19, 2023, CIJA’s President and CEO Shimon Koffler Fogel was already characterizing mass demonstrations in support of Palestinian rights as “rabid pro-Hamas demonstrations” being staged in cities across Canada.¹⁶¹ “These are large crowds gleefully cheering what Hamas did,” Koffler repeated in April 2024.¹⁶² Despite no evidence that crowds came out to support Hamas — as opposed to the stated goals of rallies, which overwhelmingly protested Israeli genocide — on October 12, 2023, CIJA posted: “The fact that we now see hundreds of people in the streets rallying in support of

158 Jonathan Rothman, “Montreal Injunction Extension,” *The Canadian Jewish News*, March 15, 2024.

159 Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, “Additional Investments Made into the Federal Security Infrastructure Program,” *CIJA*, December 7, 2023.

160 Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, “Extension Request for Injunction Against Demonstrations Targeting Jewish Community Institutions Granted,” *CIJA*, March 15, 2024.

161 The Canadian Press, “‘Thin Line’ Between Freedom of Speech and ‘Freedom of Hate,’ Says Israeli Ambassador,” *CTV News*, October 19, 2023.

162 Brent Passifume, “Politicians’ silence on pro-terror protesters has become the status quo, Jewish groups say,” *National Post*, April 22, 2024. Koffler is cited in this article.

Hamas' barbarity is no surprise given these groups have operated with impunity." CIJA posted to their website the National Post coverage of these rallies, as well, touting the salacious and potentially libelous headline: "The pro-terror hate groups organizing almost all of Canada's 'ceasefire now' rallies," about groups like the Palestine Youth Movement, whose mass mobilizing callouts for Gaza are framed as calls to terrorism.¹⁶³

One Houthi-supportive chant by a handful of people at a Toronto/Ottawa rally led CIJA to denounce the leadership of an entire union — the Ontario Public Sector Employees Union (OPSEU) — for attending in the general assembly with their own flags.¹⁶⁴ Yet only two days earlier, OPSEU had released a statement, which explicitly denounced Hamas and condemned "all acts of violence against civilians, and the alarming rise of Islamophobia and Anti-Semitism in Canada and around the world."¹⁶⁵

CIJA's focus on pro-Palestine protests as hotbeds of antisemitism and support for terrorism obfuscates the overall intent of these protests. Palestine protests in Canada have centred around voicing opposition to Israeli genocide. By employing the problematic designation of "terrorist," CIJA paints all public vocal opposition to Israeli violence as antisemitic while simultaneously affording impunity when promoting Israeli violence. This asymmetry operates to portray Israeli violence as lawful and justified while opposition to it is support for terrorism.

03.

CIJA's false assertion: The vast majority of Canadian Jews support Israel and Zionism, and are opposed to the pro-Palestine movement

Joint statement on terror in Israel by the Iran-backed terrorist entity Hamas



CIJA | October 09, 2023

Statement from all 12 Canadian Jewish Federations, Jewish Federations of Canada - UIA (JFC-UIA), and the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA)

In a joint statement made two days after the Hamas attacks from 12 Canadian Jewish Federations, Jewish Federations of Canada UIA (JFC-UIA), and CIJA, the tone was set for CIJA's ongoing messaging in the aftermath of October 7:

The situation in Israel cannot be overstated: this is an unprovoked, unprecedented attack on the very existence of Israel, based on an antisemitic ideology with the singular focus of erasing the world's only Jewish state from the map... Neither Canada nor any country in the world would allow such a mass terror event to go without a serious response to address the threat and protect their citizens. As representatives of Canada's organized Jewish community, we say, clearly and loudly: We stand with Israel.¹⁶⁶

CIJA's messaging on Israel, coupled with its continual assertion that it represents Jewish people in Canada, constructs overlapping narratives that promote multiple racisms: promoting Jewish people in Canada as Zionists who constitute a singular voice on issues relating to Israel, Palestine and October 7; and demonizing Palestinians as terrorists motivated by antisemitism. In short, Jewish Canadians are monolithic, pro-Israel, Zionist, and anti-Palestinian.

Homogenizing Jewish identity is a form of stereotyping and is a form of antisemitism. In the above statement,

163 Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, "[First Reading: The Pro-Terror Hate Groups Organizing Almost All of Canada's Cease-Fire Now Rallies](#)," *CIJA*, December 1, 2023.

164 Brent Passifiume, "[OPSEU Silent as Members Raise Alarm over Union Banner at Anti-Israel, Pro-Houthi Protest](#)," *National Post*, January 22, 2024.

165 Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU/SEFPO), "[Labour Joins Call for Immediate Ceasefire](#)," October 27, 2023.

166 CIJA, JFCA, "[Joint Statement on Terror in Israel by the Iran-Backed Terrorist Entity Hamas](#)," *CIJA Press Release*, October 9, 2023.

Jewish identity is framed as unreservedly in support of the state of Israel, notwithstanding the multiplicity of Jewish identities and the diversity of Jewish opinion on Israel, its



POSTED MARCH 24, 2024 HERE.

laws, and policies, and on Zionism. Even if a small portion of Jewish people identified as anti-Zionist, it would still be false and misleading to claim that the Jewish community “stands with Israel.”

Far beyond a slim margin, however, the plurality of Jewish opinion on Zionism and on Israel is an undeniable fact. This includes a long and robust history and continuing legacy of Jewish anti-Zionism.¹⁶⁷ A recent report found that only 51% of Jewish people in Canada identify themselves as Zionist.¹⁶⁸ The above messaging literally erases the history and current reality of the varied nature of Jewish identity and is antisemitic.

167 It is impossible to capture the breadth and depth of Jewish anti-Zionism in a footnote but see for example: Yakov M. Rabkin, *A Threat From Within: A Century of Jewish Opposition to Zionism* (Fernwood Publishing, January, 2006); Daniel Boyarin, *The No-State Solution: A Jewish Manifesto* (Yale University Press, 2023); Benjamin Balthasar, *Citizens of the Whole World: Anti-Zionism and the Cultures of the American Jewish Left* (Penguin Random House, July, 2025); Marjorie Feld, *The Threshold of Dissent: A History of American Jewish Critics of Zionism* (New York University Press, May 2024); Geoffrey Levin, *Our Palestine Question: Israel and American Jewish Dissent 1948-1978* (Yale University Press, November, 2023).

168 JSpace Canada, The New Israel Fund, and Canadian Friends of Peace Now, *Arguments for the Sake of Heaven: A Jewish Community Divided*, (New Israel Fund of Canada et al., December 2024).

CIJA’s sweeping generalizations about Jewish people living in Canada are attempts to construct and define Jewish identity by excluding large segments of Jewish people and voices from belonging in a singularly presented “the Jewish community.”

The erasure of difference in CIJA’s messaging is particularly problematic in the context of Israel’s ongoing genocide. An example exemplifies this point: CIJA’s reaction to a parliamentary motion calling for a ceasefire. This example shows CIJA’s attempts to erase differences of Jewish opinion in favour of a homogenized, Zionist, and anti-Palestinian Jewish identity. It celebrates these actions as wins for “Canada’s Jewish community,” and not simply for those who subscribe to CIJA’s mandate.

The first example shows how CIJA refused to acknowledge the many Jewish people who supported an NDP motion calling for an Israeli ceasefire. Jewish NDP member of Parliament Leah Gazan voted in favour of the motion, the language of which aligns with positions taken by Independent Jewish Voices, the Jewish Faculty Network, the United Jewish People’s Order and the Jews Say No to Genocide Coalition.¹⁶⁹ JSpaceCanada released a statement commending the passing of the motion, noting that, “With several proudly Jewish MPs voting in favour of this motion, it is clear that the Jewish community is not a monolith — and never was. We applaud these MPs who voted to represent the diversity of opinion within the Jewish community and stood strong in the face of opposition politicians and loud voices in their own community who wish to portray their own political ideologies as the unquestioned opinion of the Jewish community.”¹⁷⁰ And yet, CIJA collapsed opposition to Israel’s violence — a decades long illegal military occupation, Israeli apartheid, Israeli genocide — into accusations against the New Democratic Party (NDP) for being “anti-Israel” for bringing forth the motion, and purports to speak for all Jews in Canada in doing so.

169 For a summary see [motion including a list of MPs’ votes](#). For positions taken by each group indicating support for a ceasefire and for justice for Palestine, see for example: Independent Jewish Voices, “[IJV Calls for a Cease-fire and Systemic Change in Palestine-Israel](#)”; Jewish Faculty Network, “[JFN U of T Supports the People’s Circle for Palestine](#)”; United Jewish People’s Order, “[Our Statement on Current Events in Palestine/Israel](#)”. After a temporary ceasefire was implemented, the Jews Say no to Genocide Coalition noted their [protests against Israeli violence would not stop](#).

170 JSpaceCanada, “[JSpaceCanada Applauds the House of Commons Vote in Favour of a Negotiated Two-State Solution](#),” March 19, 2024.

The motion called for a ceasefire recognizing the devastating loss of Palestinian life and infrastructure and also recognizing Israeli life and loss.¹⁷¹ Calling the motion “anti-Israel” is misleading at best; the wording of the motion is in line with international law, human rights principles, and the rule of law. Using reductionist language, “anti-Israel” is read here as being “anti-Jewish” as it assumes that being against Israeli state policy is in itself “anti-Jewish.”

CIJA also thanked Members of Parliament who voted against the motion for their “support for #Israel and Canada’s Jewish community,” implying that those who opposed the motion are not supportive of Canadian Jews. It also implies that any Jewish MPs who voted in favour of the motion are not to be counted as part of “Canada’s Jewish community.” If opposition to Israeli state violence is anti-Israel and therefore implicitly anti-Jewish, all Palestinians are “anti-Jewish” in the context of any call for an end to Israeli violence.

In response to the NDP motion, Shimon Koffler Fogel, President and CEO, CIJA, issued a statement noting that, “The Canadian Jewish community strongly objects to the passage of a non-binding New Democratic Party (NDP) motion related to the current conflict in Gaza.”¹⁷² The claim to speak for the entirety of the Jewish community is disingenuous. At best, Fogel may be able to speak for the CIJA membership but even that is questionable given that as an unelected president of an umbrella organization, it is not clear that members are aware of their own affiliation to CIJA and have no apparent means to voice democratic objection to its public positions.

Jewish people in Canada in fact have a wide ranging opinion on issues relating to ceasefire, Israeli state violence, Palestinian human rights, and international law and many have voiced concerns about the legitimacy of organizations like CIJA to speak for Jewish Canadians.¹⁷³

Yet, Fogel goes on to note:

We are equally concerned the motion will further fuel the increased animosity towards the Jewish community in Canada that has plagued our streets since Hamas’ depraved and unprovoked attack that resulted in the barbaric murder of more than 1,200 innocent men, women, and children in Israel and the kidnapping and brutalization of more than 250 others. In Toronto alone, it was announced today that hate crime is up 93%, with a majority of those crimes targeting Canada’s Jews. It is very worrying that passage of this motion could be used to further embolden the antisemitic protests we have seen targeting the Jewish community under the guise of demonstrating against Israel.¹⁷⁴

Again, speaking on behalf of “the Jewish community,” Fogel fails to acknowledge that not all Jews within Canada feel or experience increased animosity emanating from Palestine solidarity protests. Not all Jews would agree with the characterization of the Hamas attacks on October 7 as “depraved” and “unprovoked” characterizations - language that draws on Orientalist and racist language in addition to eliding Israel’s multi-decade occupation of Palestine. For instance, in a statement released on October 8, 2023, Independent Jewish Voices decried the loss of both Palestinian and Israeli lives, called for a ceasefire and adherence to international law, and an end to ongoing and systemic violence. The organization contextualized the Hamas attacks within a broader history of ongoing Israeli violence.¹⁷⁵ Similar sentiments were expressed by the United Jewish People’s Order¹⁷⁶ and JSpace Canada called for adherence to international law and the protection of all civilian life.¹⁷⁷

A growing number of Jewish individuals and organizations are joining a chorus of Jewish voices shouting “not in our name” and “never again for anyone.”¹⁷⁸ The erasure of these voices and of the rich

171 Parliament of Canada, [Vote Detail](#), 44th Parliament, 1st Session, Vote No. 658.

172 CIJA, “[CIJA Angered and Disappointed by Passage of Amended NDP Motion](#),” March 19, 2024.

173 See for example: Greenspon, Sas, and Hersch, “[We Are Progressive Jews](#)”. For examples of surveys demonstrating a diversity of Jewish opinion in Canada, see also: JSpace Canada et al., “Arguments for the Sake of Heaven.”

174 Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, “[CIJA Angered and Disappointed](#),”

175 Independent Jewish Voices Canada, “[IJV Calls for a Ceasefire and Systemic Change in Palestine Israel](#)” Position Statement, October 8, 2023.

176 United Jewish People’s Order, “[Our Statement on Current Events in Palestine/Israel](#)”, October 9, 2024.

177 JSpace Canada, “[JSpaceCanada Calls on the Government of Canada to Maintain Support for Israel and Address Humanitarian Crisis in Gaza, Calls for Adherence to International Law](#),” October 13, 2023.

178 Examples of Jewish groups in Canada who stand opposed to Israel-

Jewish history and ongoing reality of Jewish opposition to Zionism is a form of antisemitism. While this erasure is problematic as it is an attempt to homogenize Jewish people in support of Israeli state action, the larger problem here is that the attempt takes place in the context of genocide of Palestinians. To be Jewish then is to support a genocide fuelled by anti-Palestinian racism; to be Jewish is, according to CIJA, to be anti-Palestinian.

By presenting itself as a representative voice in its public messaging and lobbying efforts, CIJA has asserted a singular Jewish voice in favour of Zionist Jewish identity, Israeli state policy and action at the expense of Palestinian human rights, and presents all Jewish people as feeling vulnerable and in need of state action to address antisemitism, largely due to a rise in Palestine solidarity protest. The next section reviews the data on the activation of legal apparatus in support of these narratives.

04. CIJA's false assertion: Protecting Jews and combating antisemitism requires restricting the civil liberties of pro-Palestinian protesters

Ottawa under pressure to publish online safety bill to tackle rising antisemitism

MARIE WOOLF >
OTTAWA
PUBLISHED NOVEMBER 6, 2023
FOR SUBSCRIBERS

The false narratives, discussed above, that: (1) Israeli genocidal violence against Palestinians is necessary and justified, (2) There is a dramatic spike in antisemitism in Canada because of the pro-Palestine movement, which

li genocide include: Independent Jewish Voices, the Jewish Faculty Network, IfNotNow, the United Jewish People's Order, Tikkun Olam-Jewish Social Workers and Therapists for Social Justice and Jews Say No to Genocide. Since October 7, IJV [reports](#) that its membership has grown by over a third. Collectively, these organizations represent thousands of Jewish people in Canada.

supports terrorism, and (3) The vast majority of Canadian Jews support Israel and Zionism, and are opposed to the pro-Palestine movement — have not only been advocated through CIJA's public messaging. CIJA has also promoted these narratives in its lobbying efforts for changes to law, policy, and legislation. Focusing on changing laws targeting speech, protest, academia, and anti-discrimination initiatives, CIJA's legal efforts aim to solidify their narrative with the force of law. Whether implicitly or explicitly, at the core of the majority of their legal efforts is the promotion of the IHRA definition of antisemitism, discussed above.

In this section we provide an overview of CIJA's advocacy of its false assertions through law, highlighting the ways in which the legal changes it advocates promote the erosion of free speech, academic freedom, and increased securitization and criminalization.

Their efforts, when read as a whole, operate to solidify anti-Palestinian racism, the weaponization of antisemitism, the narrative of the Jewish community as a monolith, and Jewish identity as inextricably tied to the state of Israel and Zionism. Through its legal advocacy work, CIJA works to protect the state of Israel from criticism, delegitimizing and silencing critics of genocide, including Israelis calling for a ceasefire and demonstrating in Israel. In other words, CIJA is activating a legal apparatus in support of Israeli genocide.

CIJA advocates for what it perceives to be 'gaps' in the law that it claims make law and legal policies ineffective in combating antisemitism. The gap is that there is no area of Canadian law that currently recognizes critique of the state of Israel or "anti-Israelism" or anti-Zionism as discriminatory. Thus, hate speech legislation in Canada has indeed been ineffective at stopping pro-Palestine protests because the conduct at these protests does not meet any of the thresholds for criminal prosecution under the hate speech regime. Although there have been multiple arrests of pro-Palestine protesters for hate speech and other protest related offences, there have been to date and to our knowledge no convictions.¹⁷⁹ According to

179 It has been estimated that in Toronto alone, there have been 100 arrests of pro-Palestine protesters. Many of the arrestees in Canada have had their charges withdrawn before trial: Dalia Awwad, "100 Arrests. Another dropped charge. What this tells us about policing the Palestine movement," *The Grind*, December 16, 2024.

CIJA's narrative, this means that the laws are ineffective or have not been properly applied.¹⁸⁰ We suggest a different reason — Palestine protests are not motivated by hatred, antisemitism, terrorism, or disdain for Jews but rather by the desire to see an end to unrelenting violence committed by the state of Israel.

The right to free speech has thus far held political speech as being at the core of *Charter*-protected speech.¹⁸¹ The reason that organizations like CIJA have been advocating so zealously for changes to law and policy is that anti-discrimination laws currently do not include Israel, Zionism, or critique of any nation state or political ideology, as protected grounds. CIJA's legal advocacy is focused primarily on ensuring antisemitism is understood through the lens of the IHRA definition, in which all Jews are Zionists, Israel is the homeland of all Jews, therefore critiques of the state of Israel is antisemitic. CIJA's advocacy aims to render opposition to these false assertions as unacceptable in Canada.¹⁸²

A chilling effect on speech, actions, and activism relating to Palestine solidarity has taken hold as a result of CIJA's conflation of Palestinian solidarity and antisemitism and will continue to gain traction as laws and policies shift towards this narrativization.

We have seen both significant buy-in and also significant resistance to these efforts. On May 14, 2024, the Ontario government passed the "Strengthening Accountability and Student Supports Act," with then CIJA president and CEO Shimon Koffler Fogel applauded, crediting its passing to CIJA's advocacy efforts.¹⁸³ He noted that, "Bill 166 addresses the shortcomings within the current framework on college and university campuses, where incidents of discrimination and hate often go unaddressed. Institutions have struggled to enforce their own policies

effectively, leading to a lack of accountability and loss of confidence in the system."¹⁸⁴ Whether there are or are not shortcomings with respect to addressing discrimination on university campuses, Bill 166 introduces unprecedented government intervention in the affairs of universities, trenching on the autonomy of academic institutions.¹⁸⁵ The shortcomings that CIJA references relate to the lack of robust disciplinary measures relating to Palestine speech, protest, scholarship, and discourse.

CIJA has also lobbied to expand security frameworks to address antisemitism including securitization and criminalization measures like calls for enhanced funding law enforcement,¹⁸⁶ enhanced security funding for community institutions,¹⁸⁷ amendments to the *Criminal Code* including the *Online Harms Act*¹⁸⁸; injunctions¹⁸⁹; claims of discrimination at various tribunals¹⁹⁰; and "bubble" legislation¹⁹¹ restricting the ability to protest by setting geographic perimeters around certain community institutions.

To expand on some of these efforts, the CIJA-endorsed legal measure Bill 163, or the *Online Harms Act*, for instance, introduced sweeping changes to the *Criminal Code* with respect to the hate speech regime. While not likely to become law in its current form because of the proroguing of Parliament in January 2025, the Bill proposed a new offence based on hate-motivated crime, an increase to the maximum penalty for hate speech offences to a *life sentence* in prison, and the ability to preemptively apply for a peace bond if a person fears that another might commit

180 See for example, Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, "[CIJA Welcomes Long Awaited Online Harms Legislation](#)," *CIJA*, February 26, 2024, where CIJA claims unprecedented levels of antisemitism and welcomes new, more stringent criminal law reforms to address it. Implicitly, this suggests that the current Criminal Code offences relating to hate speech are either ineffective or are not being properly implied.

181 *R v Keegstra*, [1990] 3 SCR 697.

182 Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (@CIJAinfo), "[Anti-Zionism is just a disguise for antisemitism. And it has no place in Canada](#)," *X* (formerly Twitter), October 20, 2023.

183 Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, "[CIJA Applauds Passage of Ontario Bill 166](#)," *CIJA*, March 6, 2024.

184 CIJA, "CIJA Applauds Passage of Ontario Bill 166."

185 OCUFA Briefing Note, "[Bill 166 Directives: Key Issues and Strategies](#)" *OCUFA*, December 6, 2024.

186 Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, (@CIJAinfo), "[This is a reminder that hate speech and antisemitism have no place in Canada](#)," posted on *X* (formerly Twitter), October 2, 2024.

187 Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, "[Additional Investments Made to the Federal Security Infrastructure Program](#),"

188 Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, "[CIJA Welcomes Long-Awaited Online Harms Legislation](#)."

189 Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, "[Court Grants Federation CJA and Intervening Parties Six-Month Safeguard Order to Protect Community](#)."

190 Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, "[Unionized Jewish Employees Taking PSAC, Canada's Largest Federal Public Service Union, to Canadian Human Rights Commission](#)."

191 Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, "[CIJA and UJA Welcome Proposed Safe Access Bylaw in Vaughan](#)."

a hate speech offence.¹⁹² In its press release, CIJA noted its own advocacy work addressing antisemitism in the online context and noted:

Over the past several years, CIJA has worked intensively both domestically and internationally to ensure legislation addresses the hateful rhetoric, harassment, and intimidation Jewish and other vulnerable communities face online, as well as to target those who use the internet to prey on and radicalize individuals for terror.¹⁹³

Increased penalty and criminal law reform is a core part of CIJA's advocacy, which must be more closely examined in light of CIJA's definition of antisemitism.

CIJA has also advocated for “bubble legislation” as necessary to protect Jewish people from what it describes as harassing, intimidating, and antisemitic protest necessitating stricter legislation to protect Jewish people. CIJA made submissions to the Toronto Police Service Board arguing for what the Canadian Constitution Foundation has labeled “unconstitutional” violations of free speech protections.¹⁹⁴ These recommendations included “Safe Access Zones” (also called “bubble legislation”) which set geographic limitations on where people can protest.¹⁹⁵ The expansion of police, court, and legislative powers that will impact all expressions of constitutionally protected speech through the use of criminal and other laws is gravely concerning both in terms of the criminalization of pro-Palestine protest and in terms of the funneling of resources into policing.¹⁹⁶

In a press release, CIJA acknowledges that such legislation limits freedom of expression but asserts that the erosion of this *Charter*-protected right is justified in order to safeguard Jewish people:

Freedom of expression is deeply rooted in our values, but not without limits. CIJA has been advocating for strengthened measures, including Safe Access legislation, to curtail months of targeted demonstrations marked by antisemitic chants, hateful signs, and physically intimidating behaviour impacting Jewish residents at community institutions, including recent protests at two Thornhill synagogues. Whether at a house of worship, a community centre, or a school, people should never have to walk through hateful demonstrations simply to participate in community life.¹⁹⁷

The protests in question were organized by a coalition of groups including Jewish groups and held outside of various synagogues in North Toronto that hosted Israeli real estate events allegedly including the sale of land considered to be inside of the West Bank where Jewish settlement is illegal. One such synagogue, the Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto hosted the “Israel Real Estate Expo” in March of 2024. In a statement to its congregants, leaders of the synagogue stated that, “‘ Hamas sympathizers are spreading the lie that purchasing property in Israel — regardless of whether it is within the green line or Judea and Samaria is ‘against international law.’ This is patently absurd and outrageously false.”¹⁹⁸ The statement in itself reveals patent disregard for international law which prohibits the transfer of the occupying population into land that is occupied.¹⁹⁹ The statement put out by the synagogue uses the term ‘Judea and Samaria’ to describe the West Bank, which claims

192 House of Commons of Canada, *Bill C-63: An Act to Enact the Online Harms Act, to Amend the Criminal Code, the Canadian Human Rights Act and An Act Respecting the Mandatory Reporting of Internet Child Pornography by Persons Who Provide an Internet Service and to Make Consequential and Related Amendments to Other Acts*, 1st Sess., 44th Parl., 70–71 Elizabeth II & 1–2 Charles III, 2021–2024, first reading February 26, 2024, <https://www.parl.ca/DocumentViewer/en/44-1/bill/C-63/first-reading>.

193 CIJA, “CIJA Welcomes Long-Awaited Online Harms Legislation.”

194 Jonathan Rothman, “Jewish Groups Tell Toronto’s Police Board How They Want to See Protests Handled,” *The Canadian Jewish News*, September 10, 2024.

195 CIJA, “Submission to the Toronto Police Service Board Regarding Public Order Policies,” *CIJA*, August 27, 2024.

196 As Black and Indigenous scholars remind us, investments in policing are investments in structural, state-sanctioned racist violence and are divestments of public resources away from marginalized communities. See for example: Robyn Maynard, *Policing Black Lives: State Violence in Canada from Slavery to the Present* (Fernwood Publishing, October, 2017); Emily

Riddle, *Abolish the Police: The Financial Cost of Law Enforcement in Prairie Cities*, Policy Brief (Yellowhead Institute, June 27, 2020); Shiri Pasternak, Kevin Walby, and Abby Stadnyk, *Disarm, Defund, Dismantle: Police Abolition in Canada* (Between the Lines Press, April, 2022).

197 CIJA, “CIJA and UJA Welcome Proposed Safe Access Bylaw in Vaughan.”

198 Beth Avraham Yosef of Toronto Congregation, *Letter*, Posted on Facebook, March 5, 2024.

199 *Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Fourth Geneva Convention)*, August 12, 1949. In 2024, the International Court of Justice issued a ruling that included the affirmation that Israel’s occupation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem is illegal and called on Israel to evacuate all settlers and to cease all settlement activity, International Court of Justice, *Legal Consequences of the Israeli Settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*, Advisory Opinion, July 19, 2024.

the land as Jewish and makes no distinction between land inside or outside of the Green Line.²⁰⁰

The characterization of these protests would lead one to believe that protestors were targeting synagogues because their aim was to harass Jewish worshippers. Contrary to CIJA's messaging, the synagogues in question were not being met with protests as Jewish institutions or Jewish places of worship, but as sites of real estate expos promoting the sale of land in contravention of international law and in the midst of an ongoing Israeli genocide; they were protested as sites of criminality, not of Jewish people or Judaism. These protests included Jewish groups and individuals.²⁰¹

Erasing the reasons for the protests, smearing them as antisemitic in nature — as opposed to politically motivated — CIJA sends a strong and misleading message that Jewish people are fearful of protests and have good reason to be when in reality, Jewish people have been at the forefront of those very demonstrations.

CIJA's advocacy for bubble legislation follows a trajectory towards increased criminalization and securitization. For example, CIJA created the National Security Working Group in 2017 to facilitate exchange and dissemination of information with RCMP, CSIS, and other law enforcement agencies.²⁰² We know that CIJA's National Security Work Group produces intelligence reports which are shared with law enforcement, like the Fredericton Police, to take one example, has shared these reports with University of New Brunswick (UNB) Security and RCMP contacts.²⁰³ Contained within these reports may be sensitive information about individuals and organizations who have no recourse or due process for allegations made against them.

On the provincial level, CIJA has strongly advocated for Bill 166: *Strengthening Accountability and Student Supports Act*, 2024, passed in Spring 2024 by Jill Dunlop, Ontario's Minister of Colleges and Universities, which includes government directives to institute vaguely defined anti-hate and racism policies at post-secondary institutions. The Bill has been vigorously opposed by a grassroots coalition of educators across Ontario called the Ontario University and Colleges Coalition, which represents over 435,000 faculty, staff, and students from across post-secondary institutions in the province. They note that the legislation "constitutes a degree of political interference unheard of in Ontario post-secondary institutions." The definitions in the legislation are vague, prompting concern for how the bill might stifle academic and intellectual freedom on campuses.²⁰⁴

With chilling resonance to the current political climate in the United States, CIJA's advocacy around antisemitism and changes to the legal landscape will invite serious erosion of civil liberties in Canada in the name of protecting Jewish people and combating antisemitism as various leaders of civil liberties organizations have warned.²⁰⁵ CIJA's legal activism exceptionalizes antisemitism; it seeks to make false notions of what antisemitism is, and to exceptionalize these false flags in legal terms. The activation of legal apparatus in support of genocide not only creates barriers to vocalizing dissent, it also ignores the ways in which criminalization and securitization are weaponized against Indigenous, Black, and racialized people undermining recent resurgent protest against anti-Black racism and anti-Indigenous racism in policing.²⁰⁶ In its calls for enhanced law enforcement to combat antisemitism, CIJA remains oblivious to how those very calls will exacerbate already existing racism embedded in Canadian legal apparatus.

200 The Green Line is formally the 1949 Armistice Line, which refers to the border separating pre-1967 Israel from the Occupied Palestinian Territories. It is an internationally recognized border.

201 Desmond Cole, "Bubble-zone protest bans threaten Palestine solidarity and public dissent," *The Breach*, May 22, 2025.

202 Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, "Press Release: Jewish Community Leaders Gather for Inaugural National Community Security Program Working Group," *MarketScreener*, February 24, 2017.

203 Government of Canada, *Access to Information and Privacy (ATIP) File #24-12580*.

204 See: Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, "Tell Your MPP to Support Bill 166," *CIJA*, May 1, 2024; Legislative Assembly of Ontario, "Bill 166, Strengthening Accountability and Student Supports Act, 2024," *Legislative Assembly of Ontario*, 2024; Ontario Universities and Colleges Coalition "Province Urged to Take Time to Rethink Flawed Post-Secondary Education Bill," *Campus Coalition*, May 6, 2024.

205 See for example: The British Columbia Civil Liberties Association, "BCCLA Statement Against the Systemic Suppression of Support for Palestine," March 13, 2025.

206 See for example: Maynard, *Policing Black Lives*; El Jones, *Abolitionist Intimacies* (Fernwood Publishing, November, 2022); Pasternak, Walby, and Stadnyk, *Disarm, Defund, Dismantle*.

Perhaps what is more shocking are the ways that all levels of government in Canada, law enforcement, educational institutions, the media, and individuals, are listening intently to CIJA's racist rhetoric and remain amenable to CIJA's interventions....

The results of this study should deeply dissuade the public, educational institutions, the media, the government, non-profit organizations, and individuals from relying on CIJA to define antisemitism, from engaging CIJA on issues related to Israel and Palestine, and from relying on CIJA to address issues relating to Jewish people in Canada. The results should also encourage people to ask questions about what investments Canadian institutions have in listening to CIJA.

Conclusion

Following the 9/11 attacks of the World Trade Centre, the pre-existing narrative of the Arab/Muslim terrorist constructed Muslims in North America as dangerous, suspect, and as targets of violence.²⁰⁷ In recent decades, we have seen this type of racism animate Western imperialism in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere resulting in massive death and destruction. Advocating against Islamophobia and anti-Palestinian racism, Palestinian people have been struggling against Western imperialism for decades and are now facing genocide fueled by racially-justified imperialism carried out by the state of Israel with the backing of Western states, most notably, the United States, but also Canada.²⁰⁸

Institutional power is at the root of relationships between racist narratives and material violence; racism is most powerful when it is backed by the power of states to enact violence. Anti-Palestinian racism is relied on to justify Israeli violence, while also erasing the narratives and lived experiences of Palestinians.²⁰⁹ Muhannad Ayyash demonstrates how racism against Palestinians is central to not only expulsion from the land, but to “the expulsion of the Palestinian critique of Zionism and Israel,” a process that is interconnected to other racisms, including anti-Black racism.²¹⁰ This perspective is shared by many scholars who understand anti-Palestinian racism to be shaped by a racial order that constitutes colonized peoples

as demonized, racialized others.²¹¹ This is part of the narrative power that CIJA wields in favour of genocide.

Claiming to speak on behalf of Jewish people, CIJA disseminates anti-Palestinian racism in the name of eradicating antisemitism. They disseminate narratives that dehumanize, exclude, erase, silence, and defame Palestinians, Palestinian narratives, and Palestine supporters. They also engage in antisemitic tropes by linking all Jewish identity to Zionism and to the state of Israel and by erasing dissenting Jewish voices. Specifically, CIJA disseminates four overarching false assertions in their public communications that operate to manufacture consent to genocide:

- 01. Unrestricted violence against Palestinians is necessary to Jewish safety**
- 02. There is a dramatic spike in antisemitism in Canada because of the pro-Palestine movement, which supports terrorism.**
- 03. The vast majority of Canadian Jews support Israel and Zionism, and are opposed to the pro-Palestine movement.**
- 04. Protecting Jews and combating antisemitism requires restricting the civil liberties of pro-Palestinian protesters.**

These assertions activate anti-Palestinian hatred and operate to justify Israeli violence against Palestinians, as well as repression of those who condemn Israeli state violence against Palestinians or advocate for Palestinian human rights. They also support and reinforce Canadian state repression of protest. These narratives prime their audience to see Palestinians and their supporters as terrorist threats, which in turn justifies silencing, violence, the erosion of civil liberties, and many other forms of repression.

207 Jasmin Zine, *Under Siege: Islamophobia and the 9/11 Generation*, vol. 12 (McGill-Queen's University Press, April, 2022); and Sherene Razack, *Casting Out: The Eviction of Muslims from Western Law and Politics* (University of Toronto Press, 2008).

208 Arms Embargo Now, Palestinian Youth Movement, and World Beyond War, *Exposing Canadian Military Exports To Israel*, July 29, 2025.

209 Majid *Anti-Palestinian Racism*.

210 Ayyash, “The Toxic Other,” 954.

211 Nahla Abdo, *Women in Israel: Race, Gender and Citizenship* (Zed Books, August, 2011); Angela Y. Davis, *Freedom Is a Constant Struggle: Ferguson, Palestine, and the Foundations of a Movement*, ed. Frank Barat (Haymarket Books, February, 2016); Noura Erakat and Marc Lamont Hill, “Black-Palestinian Transnational Solidarity: Renewals, Returns, and Practice,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 48, no. 4 (2019): 7–16.

While CIJA claims to be combating antisemitism, these narratives are themselves antisemitic. They imply that in order to be Jewish and against antisemitism, one must be pro-Israel and anti-Palestinian. There is not one monolithic Jewish voice in Canada. A significant number of Jews in Canada oppose the Israeli occupation of Palestine and the genocide of Palestinians and in one study, over half of Jewish Canadians claim not to identify with Zionism.²¹²

In addition, it is intrinsically antisemitic to obfuscate the actual threats faced by Jews. In recent months, CIJA has ignored the racist threats and actions of Donald Trump, Elon Musk, Pierre Polievre and others in favour of denouncing Palestinians and their supporters. Christian Zionism has been described as the largest antisemitic movement in world²¹³ and it is also virulently anti-Arab and Islamophobic. According to its tenets, once all of the Jews return to Israel, the “end times” will come and only the Christians will survive. Christian Zionist support for Israel has largely been ignored by CIJA, and antisemitic Christian Zionist speakers have appeared at pro-Israel rallies and at AIPAC conferences in the United States, without a whisper of condemnation by CIJA.²¹⁴

Perhaps what is more shocking are the ways that all levels of government in Canada, law enforcement, educational institutions, the media, and individuals, are listening intently to CIJA’s racist rhetoric and remain amenable to CIJA’s interventions.

This dynamic illuminates the core values of these institutions and people who are responding with increased surveillance, policies, and laws that threaten free speech and academic freedom, increased securitization and criminalization, and that embolden and sanction a genocidal state.

The results of this study should deeply dissuade the public, educational institutions, the media, the government, non-profit organizations, and individuals from relying on CIJA to define antisemitism, from engaging CIJA on issues

related to Israel and Palestine, and from relying on CIJA to address issues relating to Jewish people in Canada. The results should also encourage people to ask questions about what investments Canadian institutions have in listening to CIJA.

Due to the prevalence of racism that operates to justify genocide in CIJA’s public statements, we highly recommend the following:

- ❑ **Given the evidence of CIJA’s racism, we recommend that educational institutions, governments, and other organizations do not invite CIJA to do antisemitism training and talks, or to give evidence or to consult on antisemitism;**
- ❑ **Journalists should exercise caution before asking CIJA to speak on issues relating to antisemitism, Israel and Palestine, and issues relating to Jewish people in Canada;**
- ❑ **The general public should exercise caution, avoiding reliance on, or trusting information arising from CIJA as a representative voice of Jewish people in Canada;**
- ❑ **Law and policy makers, and law enforcement officers, should decline to engage CIJA on issues related to antisemitism, Israel and Palestine, and issues relating to Jewish people in Canada;**
- ❑ **No public funding should be allocated to CIJA to undertake antiracist work including antisemitism training.**

We look forward to a future where the urgency of the situation in Palestine does not have to be explained by reference to numbers, percentages, statistics and reports. We look forward to a future where the gravity of the situation for Palestinians can be narrated in their own words and will be believed by their words alone. We look forward to a time where the images of Israeli genocide that we are all seeing live-streamed on social media will be understood for what they are. In the meantime, we will continue to disrupt the narratives that allow genocide to continue.

212 JSpace Canada et al., “Arguments for the Sake of Heaven.”

213 Rachel Shabi, *Off-White: The Truth About Antisemitism*, (One World Publications, November, 2024), 193.

214 Mira Fox, “Who is John Hagee, the Christian Zionist pastor who spoke at the March for Israel,” *The Forward*, November, 14, 2023.

Coding Guide:

Identifying Anti-Palestinian Rhetorical Strategies

APR Rhetorical Strategy Type	Examples of statements that meet the criteria
01. Conflating antisemitism with criticism of Israel/anti-Zionism	This criterion is met if statements criticizing the state of Israel or its actions are characterized as inherently antisemitic. This can also include statements against “anti-Zionism” or “anti-Zionists” who are prone to make such claims. More specific examples may include: 1. Characterizing Palestinian accounts of what is happening in Gaza or the West Bank as not trustworthy. 2. Characterizing Palestinians as motivated by Jew-hatred. 3. Denigration/Demonization of Jews who support Palestine rights. 4. Utilizing the IHRA definition of anti-semitism to justify repression of speech on Palestine. 5. Any association of Israel with apartheid being framed as inherently antisemitic. 6. Attacking credibility of human rights groups or reports that detail the impact of Israel’s actions on Palestinians.
02. Weaponizing antisemitism	This criterion is met if statements use claims of antisemitism to shut down debate or discussion about Israel’s actions in Palestine. This criterion is not met when there is a clear distinction drawn between legitimate critique of the State of Israel’s actions and antisemitism. Some examples that meet this criterion might include: 1. Presuming that all Muslims/Arabs/Palestinians are inherently antisemitic. 2. Calls for the cancellation of pro-Palestine events or speakers. 3. Describing demonstrations as “hate rallies”, “hate fests”, etc. 4. Attacking chants such as “From the River to the Sea, Palestine will be free” as inciting violence or antisemitic. 5. Calling for the adoption or implementation of the IHRA definition of anti-semitism which conflates anti-Zionism with antisemitism. 6. Calling for organizations or institutions to exclude Palestinian or pro-Palestinian voices / speakers from events simply because they are Palestinian or pro-Palestinian. 7. Claims that Palestinians and supporters are “denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination”. 8. Any objection to Israel as a “Jewish state” being framed as inherently antisemitic. 9. Calls for law enforcement, criminalization, and stronger Criminal Code penalties for antisemitism/hate speech. 10. Attacks on racialized Palestine supporters or tokenization of racialized people who are Israel supporters. 11. Inflation of antisemitism. 12. Blaming antisemitic incidents on Palestinians and their supporters without evidence.

03. Justifying Israeli domination, repression and violence as necessary for Israel’s survival; justification of violence against Palestinians	This criterion is met if statements attempt to justify violence against Palestinians as necessary for the continued survival, success, safety, or growth of Israel. Some examples of this might include: 1. Arguing that Jews have a right to settle Palestine or claiming that Israel / weaponization of the claim that Palestine is the “ancestral homeland” of the Jews. 2. Weaponizing the claim that Jews are Indigenous to Israel/Palestine. 3. Referring to Palestinians as a “demographic time bomb” or “demographic threat”. 4. Framing Palestinians’ existence as a threat to Jewish sovereignty or safety in Israel/Palestine. 5. The use of “ Hamas” as a descriptor which automatically demonizes those being described. 6. The use of “terrorist” or “barbaric” as a descriptor that automatically demonizes those being described.
04. Demonizing the Palestinian struggle for self-determination and characterizing it as entirely violent (despite non-violent action being far more common – BDS, March of Return etc.)	This criterion is met if non-violent action in support of Palestinian liberation (e.g., protests, rallies, marches) or the Boycott, Divestment, Sanction (BDS) movement, all of which are non-violent responses to Israel’s oppression of Palestinians, are portrayed as violent or inciting violence. 1. Leveraging fear to portray non-violent action as a danger to Jews and broader society. 2. Palestinian grievances portrayed as threatening to Western societies in general and Jews in particular. 3. Claiming that chants at protests are inciting violence.
05. Distorting coverage of events through selection and omission: Israel is the victim, Palestinians are the aggressors <i>(Selective coverage / reporting of events)</i>	This criterion is met if a statement selectively omits coverage of current events in order to delegitimize protest against the state of Israel and its oppression of Palestinians. In addition, this criterion is met if current events are distorted to offer a one-sided perspective that excludes Palestinian perspectives. Some examples might include: 1. Ignoring the pogroms taking place on the West Bank. 2. Failure to condemn or defend the terrible inciteful comments of Israeli cabinet ministers and senior officials. 3. Disproven accounts of antisemitism not taken down from public posts once disproven. 4. Not mentioning Palestinian deaths in Gaza and/or only discussing the toll of conflict on Israeli lives. Israeli casualties and suffering are amplified, while Palestinian suffering is undermined and if it happens, it is deserved.

06.**Dehumanizing Arabs/
Palestinians as
inherently violent**

*(Anti-Palestinian /
anti-Arab racism
/ dehumanizing
narratives)*

This criterion is met if a statement contains racist characterizations of Palestinians or Arabs. It is also met if a statement seeks to dehumanize Arabs or Palestinians in order to justify Israeli violence against them. Some examples of this may include:

1. Statements that suggest that Arab and Muslim lives do not matter.
2. Using animalistic imagery to depict Palestinians and their allies and to explain away their outrage against Israel.
3. The description of pro-Palestine demonstrators as "gangs," "mobs" etc. which invoke criminal intent and are distinctly racialized characterizations.
4. Endorsement or recirculation of anti-Palestinian/Islamophobic statements and articles from the mainstream media.
5. Allegations of homophobia against Palestinians/Muslims or suggestions that Palestinians killed by Israelis were really killed by homophobic Palestinians.

07.**Revising history to
suit Zionist aims**

This criterion is met if a statement offers a false historical account in order to justify Israeli violence against Palestinians or the settlement of Palestine by Israel. Examples of this may include:

1. Denial of the displacement of Palestinians from their homeland and the 1948 Nakba.
2. Denial of current genocide and its extent.
3. Treating genocide as a matter of number.
4. Questioning the number of casualties/questioning the number of civilians killed because every Palestinian is a potential terrorist.
5. Pointing to the numbers of Palestinians that are still alive and reproducing as proof this is not genocide.
6. Saying the numbers are small in comparison to other massacres (Myanmar, Syria, etc.). This dehumanizes Palestinians and all those killed by other instances of state violence.
7. The portrayal of Israel as the only democracy in the Middle East despite the Occupation and discrimination against Palestinians inside.
8. Denial of Palestine.
9. Colonial narratives that portray Palestine before Jewish settlement as undeveloped, underutilized, or populated by a primitive people.
10. Denial of the existence of Palestine as an entity.
11. Refusal to name Palestine; reference to so-called Palestine or so-called Gaza.
12. Reference to Palestinians as Arabs or Muslims rather than as Palestinians.
13. Reference to the existence of Arab and Muslim states as an argument that Palestinians are not rooted in Palestine and/or do not need a state/homeland.

Operationalizing Anti-Palestinian Racism: ACLA and the CJPME Report

In response to several high-profile cases where Palestinians and their allies were singled out for punitive sanctions in Canada, the Arab Canadian Lawyers Association (ACLA) named Anti-Palestinian racism (APR) as a factor in these cases.

ACLA undertook a process of developing a framework for recognizing and naming APR by examining specific cases of injustice against Palestinians and their allies and published a report titled *Anti-Palestinian Racism: Naming, Framing and Manifestations*.²¹⁵ Recognizing that racism is a phenomena that is contextual and evolving, ACLA developed a description and a framework for identifying APR, rather than a definition. Following a process of consultation, ACLA released its report in April, 2022, cited above.

ACLA cautions that while interconnected, APR is not fully captured by anti-Arab racism and Islamophobia. What makes APR distinct is that it is rooted in the ideology of a settler colonial state.

Settler colonialism is an inherently violent process characterized by the seizure and occupation of land, accompanied by the eviction, repression, or elimination of the Indigenous inhabitants.

Anti-Arab racism and Islamophobia are often mobilized against Palestinians, but at its core, APR “targets Palestinians, their land, their culture and identity in order to maintain Jewish supremacy and accompanying narrative across Palestine. Palestinians in effect are being erased from the landscape” in the service of Israel’s settler colonial project.²¹⁶ When instances of APR are treated as Islamophobia, Palestinians and their narratives are once again erased.

ACLA identified that the most prevalent forms of APR are Nakba denial, justification of violence against Palestinians, failing to acknowledge Palestinians as an Indigenous people, erasing the human dignity of Palestinians, excluding Palestinians and allies, and defaming Palestinians and allies. Crucially, ACLA noted that APR can act through the targeting of Palestinian supporters as well as Palestinians. ACLA provided some examples of each form of APR as below:

NAKBA DENIAL includes: claims that there are no such people called Palestinians or no state of Palestine exists; that Palestinians do not originate from a land called Palestine; denial that Palestinians were ethnically cleansed (along with accompanying crimes) to create the state of Israel; rejecting the inalienable rights of Palestinian refugees including the right of return; appropriation of Palestinian history and culture without recognizing their origins; erasure of Palestinians’ connections to the land (i.e. emotional, historical, ancestral, cultural, economic).

JUSTIFICATION OF VIOLENCE includes: equating the oppressed with the oppressors or blaming the oppressed for the actions of the oppressor or rationalizing the use of violence against Palestinians. The violence can be against Palestinians in Palestine or Israel or in the diaspora and can be committed against Palestinian lands (i.e. seizing lands, damaging natural resources), property (i.e. vandalizing or demolishing homes, businesses, religious centres), and persons (i.e. physical and psychological harms).

FAILING TO ACKNOWLEDGE PALESTINIANS AS AN INDIGENOUS PEOPLE includes: denying the existence of Palestine and Palestinians as a people; denying the settler-colonization of Palestine; appropriating the culture, architecture, language, traditions, clothing, cuisine, music, arts etc. of Palestinians without acknowledgement of its origins; erasing Palestinian ancestral and present-day ties to their land and communities and denying their right to return; benefiting from, or complicity with, the removal of Palestinians from their lands; blocking redress of Palestinians in pursuit of their rights.

215 Majid *Anti-Palestinian Racism*.

216 Majid *Anti-Palestinian Racism*, 17.

ERASING HUMAN DIGNITY OF PALESTINIANS

includes: devaluing Palestinian life and well-being; denying Palestinian agency to advocate for their rights; interfering or demonizing Palestinians for pursuing their rights; characterizing Palestinians as a people that are inhumane or lack value for human life or basic human emotions; excluding or smearing those who support or participate in Palestinian movements (i.e. BDS movement); upholding a Palestine exception to fundamental rights (i.e. support free speech rights but deny Palestinians from expressing their views); threatening physical or sexual violence.

EXCLUDING PALESTINIANS AND ALLIES includes:

barring the hiring or appointment of Palestinians or others who support Palestinian human rights and movements; denying funding or sponsorship for projects that include Palestinian narratives; denying proposals or submissions for projects or works related to Palestine; erasing mention of Palestine or Palestinian narratives in mainstream media; excluding Palestinians from speaking opportunities on topics related to Palestine; onerous requirements for hosting Palestinian events; omitting references to Palestinian identity or cultural contributions.

DEFAMING PALESTINIANS AND ALLIES includes:

dehumanizing stereotypes that aims to “other” Palestinians in mainstream Western or Canadian society; depicting Palestinians as inherently hateful, violent, antisemitic, as terrorists, uncivilized, unintelligent, backwards, homophobic, misogynistic, Islamic extremists, anti-democracy, untrustworthy, biased; and claiming Palestinian movements are motivated by hate or antisemitism. Advocates are either discredited or smeared by these anti-Palestinian stereotypes (i.e. they are a terrorist sympathizer or antisemitic for holding pro-Palestine views).²¹⁷

The ACLA framework was operationalized in a report by Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME) released in December, 2023 that examined the online and print statements of a dozen institutional and media sources who are “the ‘worst offenders,’ where incidents of APR would be easy to identify and classify.”²¹⁸

Building on the ACLA framework, CJPME analyzed statements that were clearly discriminating against Palestinians and their allies in order to discern the specific patterns and rhetorical strategies that structure APR. CJPME examined 507 examples of APR found by examining the websites of Canadian non-profits and media that have been known to target Palestinian activism. Through this analysis, CJPME found that the category of “defaming Palestinians and their allies with slander” was expansive. They broke this down into 13 sub-categories, such as “defaming Palestinians and their allies with slang such as being “inherently antisemitic [with many examples of how this is framed], a terrorist threat/sympathizer, or opposed to democratic values.”²¹⁹ The coding grid developed by CJPME is reproduced below in Appendix 1.

Both the ACLA framework and the CJPME report acknowledge that racism cannot be defined in static terms. Instead, racism is a flexible and evolving structure that continuously adapts to diminish, objectify, and erase those it seeks to oppress.

As ACLA states, this “ensures the focus remains on understanding the systems and structures of oppression faced by Palestinians and other racialized and Indigenous communities. It also avoids the definition distracting from this work or limiting our experiences.”²²⁰

In applying the ACLA framework, CJPME recognized that, while it is essential to identify the specific manifestations of racism, the boundaries between different forms of racism are not discrete, and multiple forms often co-exist in the same instance.

217 Majid *Anti-Palestinian Racism*.

218 CJPME and Foundation, *Anti-Palestinian Racism in Canada*.

219 CJPME and Foundation, *Anti-Palestinian Racism in Canada*.

220 Majid *Anti-Palestinian Racism*, 8-9.

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